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Egypt as a province in the Islamic caliphate, 641–868

HUGH KENNEDY

The Muslim conquest of Egypt followed naturally from that of Syria.[1] The sources for the early Muslim conquests are extremely problematical, and it would be wrong to be too categorical about specific details.[2] The Arabic sources are generally agreed that the first attack was launched from southern Palestine at the end of 18/639 or the beginning of 19/640. The leader and inspiration for this expedition was ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ as a member of the powerful Umayyad clan. The force he led was very small, perhaps 3,500–4,000 troops, but as the conquest progressed they were joined by further reinforcements, notably 12,000 led by Zubayr ibn al-ʿAwwām, a senior companion of the Prophet ʿAmr, however, remained in command.

The invasion force headed southwest along the eastern fringes of the desert to the Byzantine stronghold of Babylon (Old Cairo). Here they besieged the garrison of the fortress, which surrendered after some seven months in Rabīʿ II, 20/Easter 641. Alexandria, not Babylon, was the Byzantine capital and, after securing his position ʿAmr marched through the Delta to attack the city. Divisions among Byzantines and the loss of so much territory seem to have led to a spirit of defeatism among the defenders. At the end of the year 30 (November 641) a treaty was made in which the Byzantines agreed to give up the city by Shawwāl 21/September 642. This meant the end of serious resistance: it was now up to the small army of

[1] The best discussion of the conquest in general remains A. J. Butler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt*, which should be consulted in the second edition, P. M. Fraser (ed.), (Oxford, 1978); see also D. R. Hill, *The Termination of Hostilities in the Early Arab Conquests* (London, 1971) and V. Christides, "The Conquest of Egypt," "*Miṣr*," *EI2*.

[2] In addition, to the general sources discussed below, two works deal with specifically with the conquests, the Coptic *Chronicle* of John of Nikiou, which survives only in an Ethiopic translation, and the anonymous *Futūḥ Bahnasā*, which contains information on the conquest of the Fayyūm and Upper Egypt, largely neglected by other sources. For these problems in general see A. North in L. I. Conrad (ed.), *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition* (Princeton, 1994).

conquerors to establish a working government over the rich lands they had so swiftly acquired.

Our understanding of the history of Egypt in the two centuries which followed the conquest is restricted by the nature of the sources at our disposal. The affairs of Egypt do figure in the general chronicles of the Muslim world, the most important of which is the *Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk* of al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), but the references are usually short and sporadic and, while they sometimes contribute details not found elsewhere, they would not allow us to reconstruct the general history with any conviction.

Fortunately for the historian, whether medieval or modern, a local historical tradition developed early in Muslim Egypt. The first major figures seem to have been Ibn Lahī'a (d. 790) and al-Layth ibn Sa'd (d. 791).[3] Their works have now been lost but, along with other early authorities, they form the basis of the first surviving book, the *Futūḥ Miṣr* of Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam (d. 871).[4] This is a collection of traditions about the conquest and early settlement of Egypt with additional material on north Africa and Spain. The material was collected for legal rather than historical reasons, but it nonetheless provides a wealth of information about the conquest and settlement.

The most important source for the period, however, are the two works of Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Kindī, the *Kitāb al-Wulāt* or *Book of Governors* and the *Kitāb al-Quḍāt* or *Book of Judges*.[5] As their titles imply, both these works deal with the history of rulers rather than being a more wide-ranging account of the whole country, but al-Kindī was a meticulous chronicler and his work, though sometimes dry, provides the basis for the reconstruction of the Muslim political system of the period. Subsequent historians of Egypt were largely dependent on Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam and al-Kindī for their accounts of this early period and offer little which is new.

While they are in many ways excellent, these Arabic accounts have a very limited focus, and their interests are almost entirely confined to the activities of the ruling group in the capital, Fusṭāṭ, with occasional references to Alexandria. To understand anything of life outside this charmed circle, we have to look at Christian sources.

Of the Christian sources, the most useful for this period is the *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church*, usually ascribed to Sawīrus ibn al-Muqaffa', Bishop of Ashmūnayn. In fact this is a composite work, and

[3] On whom see R. G. Khoury, "Al-Layth ibn Sa'd (94/713–175/791), grand maître et mécène de l'Egypte," *JNES*, 40 (1981), 189–202.

[4] On this see the English introduction to his edition of the Arabic text by C. C. Torrey (New Haven, 1922).

[5] On this see the English introduction to his edition of the Arabic text by R. Guest (London, 1912).

Sawīrus probably translated earlier biographies from Coptic to Arabic and edited them. The biographies of the patriarchs are vigorously partisan, hostile alike to the Muslims and to Christians of other sects. Their chronology and detail are often confused, but they do give us a wholly different perspective, including the opinions of taxpayers, and there is more material from Alexandria, where the patriarchs usually resided.

In the aftermath of the final Byzantine surrender of Alexandria in 22/642, the most important decision facing 'Amr was the settlement of the victorious troops. There is an old tradition that 'Amr himself wished to establish Alexandria as the capital but the Caliph 'Umar intervened to forbid this. He argued that the Arabs should not establish a city on any site which was separated from Medina by water and, of course, the Nile ran to the east of Alexandria.[6] Like many anecdotes about the second caliph, this must be treated with some caution, yet we can be certain that in Egypt, as in Iraq and initially in Syria, the Muslims did not settle in the existing administrative centres but in new towns on the edge of the desert. The Muslims may also have been concerned to avoid the Mediterranean coast, where there was always a danger of Byzantine raids.

The site eventually chosen was just north of the Roman fortress of Babylon, at a site which came to be known as Fusṭāṭ possibly in memory of the fact that 'Amr's tent had been pitched on the site during the Arab siege.[7] The settlement of the site began with the foundation of the mosque which, though much altered, is still known as Mosque of 'Amr. Around this were settled the *Ahl al-Rāya* or People of the Standard, men from Quraysh and the *anṣār, or other Companions of the Prophet, who formed the elite of the army. Khiṭṭa*s (parcels of land) were then allotted to or acquired by tribal groups. The vast majority of these early settlers came from the south Arabian or Yemeni tribes; of these Azd, Ḥimyar, including Ma'āfir, Kinda, including Tujīb, and Lakhm seem to have been the most important. Members of these South Arabian tribes formed the *jund* of Egypt. They were to dominate the political and intellectual life of Muslim Egypt for the next two centuries, and it was from their ranks with the *wujūh* (notables) were drawn. By contrast, the north Arabian (Qays) Bedouin, so powerful in Syria, were hardly represented at all.

Muslim settlement seems to have been confined to Fusṭāṭ, though troops were sent out for periods of duty in Alexandria and probably other areas as well. Fusṭāṭ was their *miṣr* and it was here that the *dīwān* which recorded their names was housed. In the years following the conquest there was continuing immigration of Arabs who came to join friends and relatives. The

[6] W. Kubiak discusses the tradition in *Al-Fustat: its Foundation and Early Urban Development* (Cairo, 1987), 58, n.4.

[7] For the early history of Fusṭāṭ see A. R. Guest, "The Foundation of Fustat and the Khittahs of that Town," *JRAS* (1907), 49–83, and Kubiak, *Al-Fustat*.

army of the conquest is said to have numbered 15,500.[8] By the Caliphate of Muʿāwiya (41–60/661–80) the number of names on the *dīwān* had allegedly reached 40,000,[9] but thereafter the register was effectively closed and only with difficulty could further names be added to it. As in other provinces of the early Islamic state, the members of the *jund* whose names appeared in the *dīwān* and who received the 'aṭā' or monthly pay were fiercely jealous of their privileged position. They were determined to protect their status from encroachments either by caliphs who wished to acquire a larger share of the revenue for themselves, or from fellow Muslims trying to acquire a position on the *dīwān*. Much of the political agitation and violence in the first two centuries of Muslim Egypt was concerned in one way or another with these issues.

The most important figure in the political life of the province was the governor or *wālī*. He was in charge of leading the prayers in the mosque on Fridays – at which the *khuṭba* was pronounced and the name of the caliph proclaimed – and of making sure that the *kharāj* (tax) was collected. Sometimes these two functions were divided and separate officials placed in charge of taxation. In theory the powers of the governor were absolute; in practice they were more limited and differed from one individual to another. Some, like Maslama ibn Mukhallad al-Anṣārī (47–62/667–82) or the Umayyad 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Marwān (65–86/685–715) enjoyed long terms of office and were effectively viceroys. Others held the position for much shorter periods, a tendency which became more pronounced in the early 'Abbāsid period (132–193/750–809), when governors were changed much more frequently. In these circumstances, a governor on a short-term appointment who was an outsider to the province had very little opportunity to establish his position.

The governor did not have an easy task. On one hand he had to keep the confidence of the caliph by keeping the province peaceful and forwarding as large a proportion of the revenue as was practical to Damascus or Baghdād. On the other hand, he also had to satisfy the demands of the *jund* of Fusṭāṭ who constituted the only military force at his disposal, and who reacted violently if their pay was not provided. From 107/725–26 on there were also repeated rebellions of the Copts, protesting at over-taxation. Caught as they were between the various conflicting pressures, it is hardly surprising that some governors lost their jobs fairly quickly.

After the governor, the most important figure in the political administration was the *ṣāḥib al-shurṭa*. This official was in charge of maintaining law and order and of leading the *jund*: it is also probable that he was responsible

[8] Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Kindī, *The Governors and Judges of Egypt*, ed. R. Guest (London, 1912), 8–9.

[9] *Futūḥ Miṣr*, ed. C. C. Torrey (New Haven, 1922), 102. Kubiak, *Al-Fustat*, 79.

for paying the *'aṭā'* to those whose names were on the *dīwān*, which provided opportunities for patronage and building up a following. The *ṣāḥib al-shurṭa* in Egypt was almost always a local man, chosen by the governor from the *wujūh* of Fusṭāṭ and the office often ran in families. The most conspicuous of these local dynasties was the family of Mu'āwiya ibn Ḥudayj al-Tujībī. Mu'āwiya himself seems to have been in the original army of conquest, and some held that he was a companion of the Prophet. In the civil wars which followed the murder of 'Uthmān, he played an important part in securing Egypt for the Umayyads. His son 'Abd al-Raḥmān and grandsons 'Abd al-Wāḥid and 'Abd Allāh served as *ṣāḥib al-shurṭa* and as *qāḍī*. Their influence seems to have been unaffected by the 'Abbāsid Revolution. 'Abd Allāh became *ṣāḥib al-shurṭa* in 143/760 and held office for nine years until 152/769, when he was appointed governor (a rare example of a local man holding this office). On his death three years later his status was inherited by his son Hāshim and then by his grandson Hubayra, both of whom served as *ṣāḥib al-shurṭa*. The family remained one of the most important in the province until most of them were massacred in the civil wars of the year 200/815.

The family of Mu'āwiya ibn Ḥudayj held office through five generations and were leading figures among the *wujūh* of Fusṭāṭ for a century and a half, but they were not exceptional. The families 'Amr ibn Qaḥzam al-Khawlānī, 'Assāma ibn 'Amr al-Ma'āfirī and 'Ulayy ibn Ribāḥ al-Lakhmī are other examples of the tightly knit oligarchy which dominated Egypt in this period. Their power was based on their property, the support they could command from the *jund* and their knowledge of the country and its administration, which was indispensable to an incoming governor.

The third major figure in the life of the community was the *qāḍī* or judge. In the Umayyad period these were usually chosen by the governor from the leading families of Fusṭāṭ, and it was not unknown for the same man to serve as both *qāḍī* and *ṣāḥib al-shurṭa*. In the early 'Abbāsid period this slowly began to change: *qāḍīs* were chosen from the *fuqahā* and were increasingly specialists. The caliphs began to take a more active interest in their appointment, and in 164/780 al-Mahdī appointed Ismā'īl ibn al-Yasa' al-Kindī, who was not only an outsider from Kūfa in Iraq but also followed the law school of Abū Ḥanīfa which was then completely unknown in Egypt; this was a clear attempt to assert central authority.[10] Despite this, however, most *qāḍīs* were respected local men, at least until the reassertion of caliphal control by 'Abd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir in 211/826.

In the years which followed the conquest the Muslim community in Egypt was involved in two major developments, expanding Muslim rule in north Africa and responding to the major political upheavals in the rest of the

[10] Al-Kindī, *Governors and Judges*, 371.

Muslim world. There was also a problem they did not have to face: rebellions among the local population. The reasons for this absence of local resistance are something of a puzzle. It seems clear that the local Monophysite Copts, whether or not they had actually aided the Muslim invasion, saw Muslim rule as no worse or more oppressive than the rule of the Chalcedonian Byzantines. More important, perhaps, was the fact that Muslim rule intruded little into the everyday lives of most native Egyptians. The Muslims lived apart from them, they did not take possession of houses or fields. Of course, they did collect taxes, but so had their predecessors, and the tax collectors with whom most people came in contact were the same sort of local officials who had collected taxes for the previous administration. Very few Copts seem to have converted to Islam at this early stage. It was only when tax collection became harder and conversion increased in the later Umayyad period, that Coptic revolts broke out for the first time.

After the conquest ʿAmr was accepted as governor by the Caliph ʿUmar. After ʿUmar's death, however, the new Caliph ʿUthmān dismissed him in 25/645 and replaced him by ʿAbd Allāh ibn Saʿd ibn Abī Sarḥ, who had previously been sub-governor of the Ṣaʿīd (Upper Egypt). ʿUthman was determined to centralise the administration of the caliphate, and a semi-independent ruler like ʿAmr would want to keep all the resources of the province for himself and his followers. ʿAbd Allāh was to be his agent in this and he set about reforming and tightening up the financial administrative system the Muslims had inherited from the Byzantines.[11] As a result of this he was unpopular among many in the province. He successfully drove off a Byzantine counter-attack on Alexandria in 25/646, and he began the development of a Muslim navy which defeated the Byzantines at the Battle of the Masts off the coast of Lycia in 34/654.[12] ʿAmr had led the first Muslim expedition to Tripolitania, and Ibn Abī Sarḥ followed this up with a major expedition which resulted in the defeat of the Byzantines near Subaytila in 27/647. The Muslims withdrew after the Byzantines had paid very substantial sums in tribute. In 31/651–52. Ibn Abī Sarḥ led an expedition south to

[11] The literature on the fiscal administration of early Islamic Egypt is extensive: for introductory discussions see H. I. Bell, "Organisation of Egypt under the Ummayad Khalifs," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 28 (1929), 278–86; A. Grohmann, *From The World of Arabic Papyri* (Cairo, 1952); K. Morimoto, *The Fiscal Administration of Egypt in the Early Islamic Period* (Tokyo, 1981); G. Frantz-Murphy, "Land tenure and social transformation in early Islamic Egypt," in T. Khalidi (ed.), *Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East* (Beirut, 1984), 131–39; J. B. Simonsen, *Studies in the Genesis and Early Development of the Caliphal Taxation System* (Copenhagen, 1988). For a recent bibliography of the papyrological literature, see Butler, *Arab Conquest*, xlv–liv, lxxvi–lxxxiii, and the succinct overview in Christides, "Islamic Egypt".

[12] For the development of Muslim naval power, largely based on Egyptian evidence, see A. M. Fahmy, *Muslim Sea Power in the Eastern Mediterranean from the 7th to the 10th Cent.* (London, 1950).

Nubia. The Muslims were unable to conquer the country and a treaty was made between them and the Nubians, known as the *baqṭ* (from the Latin *pactum*). According to this, there was to be peace between the two peoples, and the Nubians were to send gifts of slaves while the Arabs responded with gifts of food. The treaty effectively established the southern frontier of Muslim Egypt at Aswān. With only occasional interruptions, relations remained peaceful throughout the early Islamic period.[13]

Ibn Abī Sarḥ's determination to forward revenue from Egypt to the caliph in Medina provoked opposition among the Muslims, who felt that it was theirs by right of conquest.[14] Matters were made worse by the arrival of more Arab settlers which put further pressures on local resources. This resentment finally exploded in Rajab 35/January 656 when the governor was out of the country on a visit to Medina. It was led by one Muḥammad ibn Abī Ḥudhayfa who openly rejected the governor's authority. He was supported by a party drawn mostly from those groups which had participated in the first conquest but now found that their monopoly of wealth and power had been undermined. Like Ibn Abī Ḥudhayfa himself, these were not important tribal leaders. According to the well-known story, some 400 of these protestors set out to demand redress from 'Uthmān. They accepted his assurances but on their journey back they intercepted a messenger who was carrying the caliph's orders to Ibn Abī Sarḥ, then at Ayla (modern 'Aqaba), to deal with them. Furious at this apparent deceit, they returned to Medina and played a leading role in the siege and murder of 'Uthmān in 35/656.

Meanwhile in Egypt Muḥammad ibn Abī Ḥudhayfa was opposed by a group of pro-'Uthmān notables led by Mu'āwiya ibn Ḥudayj al-Tujībī and including Maslama ibn Mukhallad al-Anṣārī, soon to be governor, and 'Amr ibn Qaḥzam al-Khawlānī. When news of the caliph's murder reached Fusṭāṭ, the 'Uthmānī party took the oath of allegiance to Mu'āwiya ibn Ḥudayj and came out in open opposition. In Ramaḍān 36/February 657 the two sides fought at Kharibtā, between Fusṭāṭ and Alexandria. The 'Uthmānī party was victorious but was unable to take Fusṭāṭ. The next month, Mu'āwiya ibn Abī Sufyān came from Syria and captured some of the leading insurgents, including Ibn Abī Ḥudhayfa, by a ruse and transported them to Syria where they were soon killed.

At this stage 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib was still generally accepted as caliph, but his attempts to establish his power in Egypt were dogged by difficulties. His first governor, Qays ibn Sa'd al-Anṣārī, was dismissed in 37/late 657 because he was suspected of preparing to defect to Mu'āwiya. The next governor was one of 'Ali's most devoted supporters, Mālik al-Ashtar, but he died at

[13] See P. Forand, "Early Muslim Relations with Nubia," in *Der Islam*, 48 (1972), 111–21, updated with full bibliography by V. Christides "Nuba," *EI2*.

[14] For the revolt in Egypt see M. Hinds, "The Murder of the Caliph 'Uthman," *IJMES*, 3 (1972), 450–69.

Suez before he was able to enter the province. ʿAlī then appointed Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr, son of the first caliph, who took office in 37/early 658. He attempted to take strong measures against the pro-ʿUthmānī party at Kharibtā, burning their houses in Fusṭāṭ and imprisoning their families, but this inevitably drove them to seek the support of Muʿāwiya ibn Abī Sufyān in Syria. In response Muʿāwiya despatched ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ, who had long sought to regain his old position in the province he had conquered, with a Syrian army. In Ṣafar 38/July–August 658 a bloody battle was fought at al-Mussannāh, between Fusṭāṭ and ʿAin Shams. ʿAmr's forces were victorious and soon after they took Fusṭāṭ: Muʿāwiya ibn Ḥudayj personally ordered the execution of Abū Bakr's son.

Egypt was now firmly attached to the Umayyad cause. Until his death at the ʿĪd al-Fiṭr 43/January 664, ʿAmr was undisputed ruler of the province. It is said that he was allowed to keep all the surplus revenue, after the payment of the *ʿaṭā'* of the *jund* and other expenses, for himself.[15] His ascendance was also a triumph from the *wujūh* of Fusṭāṭ, confirming them in their position. The affair shows how the Sufyānid regime attracted and relied on the support of local Muslim notables in the provinces and was prepared to confirm their privileged status in return for political support.

ʿAmr did not, however, establish a hereditary governorate. On his death the caliph appointed his own brother, ʿUtba ibn Abī Sufyān. During his short governorate, he seems to have tried to increase the Muslim presence in Alexandria: 12,000 *jund* were sent there and a Dār al-Imāra was constructed. However, the commander complained that they were too few and that he felt threatened, presumably by the the local Christian population.[16] He in turn was succeeded for a short while by one ʿUtba ibn ʿĀmir, who had been the Prophet's muleteer. In 49/669 he in turn was replaced by a local notable, Maslama ibn Mukhallad al-Anṣārī, who had petitioned Muʿāwiya for the job.

Maslama was to remain governor for the rest of Muʿāwiya's caliphate. Unusually for a member of the *anṣār* (people of Medina), he had long been a leader of the Umayyad party. We have little information on his long governorate apart from the names of his *aṣḥāb al-shurṭa*; his extension of the mosque of ʿAmr, and the absence of incident in the Arabic chronicles or of vigorous complaint in the Christian sources probably point to a period of peace and calm. On the main political issue of the day, Maslama remained firmly loyal to the Umayyad cause: when Muʿāwiya died in the spring of 680, he had no hesitation in having the oath of allegiance taken to his son Yazīd, threatening the only objector, ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ, with death by fire.

[15] Al-Kindī, *Governors and Judges*, 31.
[16] Ibid., 36.

Maslama's own death in 62/682 was followed by renewed signs of conflict and discontent in the province. The main issue was one which was to recur throughout the early Islamic period. The *wujūh* and *jund* of Egypt wanted a governor chosen from their own ranks who would make the safeguarding of their interests his priority. The new Caliph Yazīd appointed Sa'īd ibn Yazīd al-Fihrī from Palestine. Despite the fact that he continued his predecessor's *ṣāḥib al-shurṭa*, 'Ābis ibn Sa'īd al-Murādī, in office, he was met with vigorous opposition from 'Amr ibn Qaḥzam al-Khawlānī, a leading member of the *wujūh*, who remonstrated with him that there were a hundred young men as good as he in Egypt. As a result the new governor was generally unpopular.

In 64/683 Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiya died, and the caliphate was immediately claimed by Ibn al-Zubayr in Makka. He attracted the support of the Kharijites in Egypt (who appear for the first time at this stage) and they pledged their allegiance to him. In return he dispatched a new governor, 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Utba al-Fihrī, supported by many of the Kharijites who were with him in Makka. The governor, Sa'īd ibn Yazīd, simply retired, but the *ashrāf* of Egypt would not accept this Khariji-dominated regime, and when the Umayyad Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam was proclaimed caliph in Syria at the end of 64/summer 684, they secretly began to make approaches to him.

Marwān and his supporters, among them his son 'Abd al-'Azīz, immediately set out for Egypt. The governor imagined that the Egyptians were behind him and ordered the fortification of Fusṭāṭ and a trench was dug whose traces could still be seen in al-Kindī's time, three centuries later. He also sent a fleet and armies to oppose 'Abd al-'Azīz at Ayla, but the army retreated and the fleet was dispersed by a storm.

When Marwān arrived at Fusṭāṭ there were one or two days of fierce fighting and then a group of the leading figures in the city arranged a capitulation. Ibn Zubayr's governor was to be allowed to leave with his possessions. In Jumādā I 65/December 684 Marwān entered the Egyptian capital and settled there, building a palace for himself. A few leading members of the *jund*, including al-Akdar ibn Ḥamām, the *sayyid* of Lakhm, refused to abandon their oath of allegiance to Ibn Zubayr, and around eighty of them were executed. This in turn provoked widespread discontent and some 30,000 of the *jund* gathered outside Marwān's residence to protest, but they were soon dispersed.

Before he returned to Syria, Marwān made arrangements for the government of Egypt. He appointed his son 'Abd al-'Azīz as governor, and according to the accounts in al-Kindī, gave him careful instructions to rule in cooperation with the leaders of the *jund*. Marwān's takeover of Egypt marked a major victory in the struggle between the Umayyads and Ibn Zubayr, but it was also a victory for the *jund* of Fusṭāṭ and its leaders: it was

not a Syrian takeover and no significant numbers of Syrian soldiers came to settle. The local elite retained its privileged position and, as a sign of this continuity, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz appointed as his first *ṣāḥib al-shurṭa* ʿĀbis ibn Saʿīd al-Murādī, who had also served all of the three previous governors in that capacity. When ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz left the province to visit his brother, ʿĀbis unilaterally decided to increase the *ʿaṭā'* of the *jund* and when the governor returned he had no choice but to acquiesce in the decision.

ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Marwān was to remain governor for twenty years until his death in 86/705, a period which coincided almost exactly with the caliphate of his brother, ʿAbd al-Malik. He was the most important figure in the history of Umayyad Egypt and ruled as a virtual viceroy. Relations with his brother were unusually cordial but the caliph does not seem to have interfered in the internal affairs of the province at all, while ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz sent 3,000 Egyptian soldiers to help in the final siege of Ibn al-Zubayr in Makka. The only source of tension seems to have occurred over the succession, when ʿAbd al-Malik wanted his brother to take the oath of allegiance to his son al-Walīd but ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz refused, hoping apparently to leave open the possibility that his own son al-Aṣbagh would succeed.

ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz's reign was a period of almost uninterrupted peace. The governor spent most of his time in Fusṭāṭ visiting his brother in Syria on two occasions and making four trips to Alexandria. He extended the mosque in Fusṭāṭ and built a large palace. When the plague struck in 70/689–90 he left the capital and established a new government center at Ḥulwān.[17] This was also a period of Muslim expansion in the Maghrib, and ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz was determined that this enterprise should be controlled from Fusṭāṭ and that the booty taken should be brought there rather than to Damascus. In around 74/694 ʿAbd al-Malik had sent a large Syrian army under Ḥassān ibn Nuʿmān al-Ghassānī to the Maghrib but, after winning a number of victories, he was dismissed by ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz and replaced by the governor's nominee, Mūsā ibn Nuṣayr, who was to complete the conquest of north Africa and command the Muslim invasion of Spain.

ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz's long governorate came to an end in the spring of 86/705. It seems that he had been grooming his son al-Aṣbagh for the succession.[18] He hoped no doubt to make Egypt into a hereditary appanage for his branch of the Umayyad family, but the son predeceased his father by a few months. Though this plan failed, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz's descendants seem to have continued to live in the province and to have made an attempt to seize control in early ʿAbbāsid times.

The caliph was determined to assert his right to select a governor and he

[17] For his role as a builder see al-Muqaffaʿ, *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria*, ed with English trans. B. Evetts, Patarologia Orientalis, 296–7.

[18] Noted in Sawīrus, *History of the Patriarchs*, 304–5 where al-Aṣbagh is said to have been very grasping towards the Copts.

appointed his own son, ʿAbd Allāh, with instructions to remove all traces of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz's administration. He dismissed all the officials, including the *ṣāḥib al-shurṭa*, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muʿāwiya ibn Ḥudayj, who was placed in charge of the garrison (*murābiṭa*) in Alexandria, a position of honor but well away from the capital. He also made another important change: in 87/706 he ordered that the *dīwāns* be compiled in Arabic rather than in Coptic, while the Copt in charge was dismissed and replaced by a Syrian from Ḥimṣ. In this way the Egyptian administration was brought into line with a practice which had been introduced by ʿAbd al-Malik in Syria, and it is clear that Arabic was increasingly widely used. It also meant that Copts who wanted a post in the administration now had to learn Arabic and this in turn may have encouraged conversion to Islam. Christians however, continued to be influential; in the governorate of Qurra ibn Sharīk, for example, one Theodore seems to have been in charge of the administration of Alexandria, though not, of course, of leading the Muslims in prayer,[19] and as late as the reign of al-Maʾmūn a Copt, Isḥāq ibn Andūna al-Sayyid, was *ṣāḥib dīwān al-sulṭān*.[20]

ʿAbd Allāh's short governorate was marred by a severe famine, the first recorded under Muslim rule. Many people blamed the food shortage on the governor, accusing him of corruption. The Copts saw him as grasping and oppressive, increasing the taxes and decreeing that the dead could not be buried before their taxes were paid.[21] Whether it was because of complaints about his conduct or simply because the new Caliph al-Walīd (86–96/705–15) wanted to appoint his own man, ʿAbd Allāh was dismissed in 90/709 and replaced by Qurra ibn Sharīk al-ʿAbsī.

In some ways Qurra is the best-known of all the Umayyad governors of Egypt. In a sense this is by chance, since it is from his period of office that the richest collection of administrative papyri survive,[22] but both Christian and Muslim chronicle sources also suggest that the administration was becoming increasingly efficient at collecting taxes and dues. Qurra is also said to have reorganised the *dīwān* (*dawwana al-dīwan*)[23] which may mean that he added new names to it. For al-Kindī, however, his main achievements were the rebuilding of the mosque in Fusṭāṭ on the caliph's orders and irrigating an area of desert near the city at Iṣṭabl.[24]

[19] Sawīrus, *History of the Patriarchs*, 311–12, 326. There is no mention of this in the Arabic sources.
[20] Sawīrus, *History of the Patriarchs*, 591.
[21] Sawīrus, *History of the Patriarchs*, 307–10.
[22] In addition to the general works listed in n. 7 above, see N. Abbott, *The Kurrah Papyri from Aphrodito in the Oriental Institute*, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilisation 15 (Chicago, 1938), and Y. Ragib, "Lettres nouvelles de Qurra ibn Sarik," *JNES*, 49 (1981), 173–88.
[23] Al-Kindī, *Governors and Judges*, 65.
[24] Al-Kindī, *Governors and Judges*, 63–6.

Qurra died in office in 96/715. Perhaps because of a concern for experience and administrative efficiency, the new governor was not an Umayyad grandee but a local man. ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Rifāʿa al-Fahmī had succeeded his uncle as *ṣāḥib al-shurṭa* in 91/710. He was now appointed governor in his own right, the first, but by no means the last, occasion on which such a promotion was made.[25] Sawīrus[26] paints a picture of increasing fiscal oppression at this time, the most marked feature of which was a regulation that all travellers had to carry an official passport (*sijil*) presumably to prevent them from escaping taxation and forced labor. The author claims that this policy had a very damaging effect on the economic life of the country and virtually brought trade to a standstill. The papyri from Qurra's rule also show the authorities making strenuous efforts to control the free movement of people, with drastic penalties for local officials who did not arrest and return fugitives.

In 99/717 the Caliph Sulaymān was succeeded by his cousin ʿUmar, son of that ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Marwān who had been governor of Egypt. The Egyptian sources support the picture given elsewhere of ʿUmar as the originator of major reforms. Al-Kindī notes that he took advice about the appointments of a governor and enquired who in Egypt was the most suitable man. Two names were mentioned, those of Muʿāwiya ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muʿāwiya ibn Ḥudayj and Ayyūb ibn Shurāḥbīl, whom the caliph chose. For the Muslims in the *dīwān* ʿUmar's accession meant an increase in salaries on the caliph's orders, and the numbers in the *dīwān* were also to be increased by 5,000. Various pious measures of Islamization were also decreed: wine shops were to be closed and the stocks destroyed. Money was set aside to pay the debts of Muslims who had fallen on hard times and Christian village headmen (*mawāzīt*) were to be replaced by Muslims. From the Christian point of view too there were benefits, and churches and monasteries had their fiscal privileges confirmed. But Christians also found themselves under pressure to convert and the poll tax was made a universal obligation.[27]

As elsewhere, ʿUmar's death meant a reversal of most of these policies. The new caliph, Yazīd II, appointed a new governor, Bishr ibn Ṣafwān al-Kalbī, an Umayyad supporter from Syria, who appointed his own brother Ḥanẓala as *ṣāḥib al-shurṭa*; the salary increases for Muslims and the fiscal immunities of churches were both cancelled. When Bishr was sent to Ifrīqiya as governor in 721, Ḥanẓala was appointed to succeed him.

As usual, the accession of a new caliph meant a new governor and when Hishām in turn succeeded in 105/724 he began by appointing his brother

[25] Sawīrus, *History of the Patriarchs*, 321, has Qurra succeeded by one Usāma.

[26] Sawīrus, *History of the Patriarchs*, 322–5.

[27] Sawīrus, *History of the Patriarchs*, 235–6. The classic discussion of Umar's fiscal policy is H. A. R. Gibb, "The Fiscal Receipt of Omar II," *Arabica*, 2 (1955),1–16.

Muḥammad. The new governor arrived in Egypt to find the plague raging, took one look and resigned his office, retiring to his estate in al-Urdunn. After this failed attempt at family government, Hishām decided on a major change in the administration of the province. He appointed 'Ubayd Allāh ibn al-Ḥabḥāb, not as governor but as *ṣāḥib al-kharāj* or head of taxation.[28] Until his transfer to north Africa in 117/734 'Ubayd Allāh was the real ruler of Egypt: when the governor al-Ḥurr ibn Yūsuf quarrelled with him in 108/727, 'Ubayd Allāh simply wrote to the caliph, who dismissed the governor; his successor soon suffered the same fate.

The Christian sources used by Sawīrus saw Hishām as a just, if strict, ruler. He is described as "God fearing after the manner of the Muslims." He was especially praised for allowing the restoration of the Jacobite Patriarchate of Antioch and for ordering that receipts should be given for the payment of taxes so that none might be unfairly treated.[29] Ibn al-Ḥabḥāb is given a less good press. He conducted a major cadastral survey of the country, measuring lands, counting beasts and obliging all men to wear numbered badges. His cruelty to the aged Patriarch Alexander is recorded with all the pathos of a martyr's agony.

'Ubayd Allāh was appointed to increase the tax revenues of the province. This he did by increasing the *kharāj* by a *qirāṭ* (or an eighth of a *dīnār*) per *dīnār* collected.[30] This move provoked a violent reaction in 107/725–6. For more than eighty years since the conquest the Coptic population, certainly still the overwhelming majority in Egypt, had peaceably borne the burden of taxation. Now, because of this most recent increase and the fact that tax-gathering was increasingly in the hands of the Muslims, not their own people, revolts began. These seem to have been leaderless and without any developed political programme. They never came near to overthrowing Muslim rule, but they tested the military ability of the *jund* and could destroy a governor who had lost the confidence of the local militia. This first revolt was centered in the Eastern Hawf and was put down with great loss of life.

The governor, meanwhile, remained responsible for conducting the prayers and leading the *jund*; some of these were local notables, including 'Abd al-Malik ibn Rifā'a (108/726), who had been a previous governor, and his brother al-Walīd (108–17/726–35). Politically the most important event was the transfer of a number of Qaysī Arabs to the Sa'īd, beginning in 109/727–28. As already mentioned, most of the Arabs in the *jund* came from south Arabian tribes. Under Umayyad rule, and particularly since the battle

[28] On 'Ubayd Allāh see N. Abbott, "A new papyrus and a review of the administration of 'Ubaid Allah ibn al-Ḥabḥāb," in G. Makdisi (ed.), *Arabic and Islamic Studies in honor of Hamilton A. R. Gibb* (Leiden, 1965), 21–35.

[29] Sawīrus, *History of the Patriarchs*, 327–28.

[30] Sawīrus, *History of the Patriarchs*, 340.

of Marj Rāhiṭ (65/684) when the Umayyads, supported by the Yemenis, had defeated their Qaysī Syrian rivals, a major rivalry had developed between Qays and the Yemen which threatened to tear the Umayyad state apart.

During the reign of Hishām there was a large scale migration of Qaysīs into north Africa and, later, Spain. The transfer of Qaysīs to Egypt is said to have been suggested by 'Ubayd Allāh ibn al-Ḥabḥāb. The caliph agreed to it on the condition that they were not permitted to settle in Fusṭāṭ, presumably because he realised that their presence would provoke a confrontation with the locals, and that their *dīwān* should be transferred to Egypt. Ibn al-Ḥabḥāb arranged that some 3,000 of them be recruited in the Syrian desert and they were settled in the Eastern Ḥawf: money from the tithes was given to them to buy horses and camels and they made a living by carrying food to Suez, presumably to go by sea from there to the Ḥijāz. Other Qaysī bedouin followed from Syria until there were some 5,000 at the end of Hishām's reign.

The purpose of this move is obscure, but Ibn al-Ḥabḥāb probably wanted to relieve pressure on the resources of Syria and to provide a counter-balance to the monopoly of power held by the *jund*. It marks an important stage in the Arabization of the province because, for the first time, Arabs settled in considerable numbers outside Fusṭāṭ and Alexandria.

This period of comparative stability was brought to an end with the death of the Caliph Hishām in 125/743, and there followed almost a decade when the growing weakness of the Umayyad caliphate led to intense rivalries and open hostility in Egypt. The governor at the time was Ḥafṣ ibn al-Walīd al-Ḥaḍramī, a member of a well-established local family who had previously served as *ṣāḥib al-shurṭa* and briefly as governor. He seems to have been determined to reestablish the position of the *jund* of Fusṭāṭ. His first action was to expel all the Syrians who had drifted into Fusṭāṭ, which he only accomplished by the use of force. Next he raised a new military force in Egypt of 30,000 men recruited from the *maqāmiṣa* and the *mawālī*: exactly who these were is not clear, but it is likely that they were recruited among the non-Arab Muslims of the country, perhaps as a counter to the Qaysīs. This new force was known as the Ḥafṣīya, after the governor who had raised it.

When the pro-Qaysī Caliph Marwān ibn Muḥammad established his power in 127/744 there was an immediate reaction: Ḥafṣ resigned and the caliph ordered that the Ḥafṣīya be disbanded. He appointed a new governor, Ḥassān ibn 'Aṭāhiya. These measures provoked a violent response, the Ḥafṣīya refused to disband and the *jund* of Fusṭāṭ besieged the new governor's house. In the end Ḥassān and the *ṣāḥib al-kharāj* were obliged to leave the country and the unwillingly Ḥafṣ was restored.

Marwān could not afford to let Egypt slip from his grasp. In 128/745 he dispatched a large force of Syrian troops and a new governor, Ḥawthara ibn

Suhayl al-Bāhilī, described as a Bedouin Arab well known for his eloquence.[31] Some of the Egyptian *jund* and the Ḥafṣīya wanted to resist him but Ḥafṣ was unwilling to lead them and after some negotiation, Ḥawthara entered Fusṭāṭ. He immediately began a purge of the opposition leaders, including the commander of the Ḥafṣīya and Ḥafṣ himself. He also set about recruiting 2,300 more troops from the Umayyad *mawālī* and Qays to bolster his position. There was a marked contrast between this brutal takeover and the much lighter hand shown by Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam when he took over the province in 65/684.

Meanwhile, the Umayyad caliphate was collapsing rapidly under the onslaught of ʿAbbāsid armies from the east. In Jumādā I 131/January 749 Ḥawthara was ordered to go the Wāsiṭ to help Ibn Hubayra resist the invaders. His successors in Egypt were unable to prevent many Egyptians from declaring their support for the ʿAbbāsids in Alexandria, the Ḥawf and Aswān. As far as we can tell, these ʿAbbāsid supporters were all Egyptian Arabs, not Khurāsānīs or other ʿAbbāsid supporters from the east. In Shawwāl 132/May–June 750 the Caliph Marwān himself arrived, hotly pursued by ʿAbbāsid forces led by Ṣāliḥ ibn ʿAlī and Abū ʿAwn. He and his supporters attempted to establish control over the province but time was not on their side, and in Dhū'l-Ḥijja 132/August 750 he and many of his followers were killed at Būṣīr.

Egypt under the early ʿAbbāsids, 132–193/1750–809[32]

At the beginning of 133/Summer 750, Ṣāliḥ ibn ʿAlī and the ʿAbbāsid troops entered Fusṭāṭ and a new era had begun. The most striking characteristic of early ʿAbbāsid administration in Egypt is its continuity with the Umayyad period. As before, the governors were mostly outsiders, chosen from among the leaders of the Khurāsānī military or minor members of the ʿAbbāsid family on short-term postings, while the *aṣḥāb al-shurṭa* continued to be chosen from the leading families, the *wujūh*, of Fusṭāṭ, families such as the descendants of Muʿāwiya ibn Ḥudayj al-Tujībī, ʿAmr ibn Qaḥzam al-Khawlānī and ʿAssama ibn ʿAmr al-Maʿāfirī remained as important as they had in Umayyad times. There was no attempt to settle large numbers of Khurāsānī troops in the province and the ʿAbbāsids ruled in cooperation with the local elite.

The first governor of this province was Ṣāliḥ ibn ʿAlī ʿAbbāsī, an uncle of the first two ʿAbbāsid caliphs. He may have hoped to establish a position in Egypt as ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Marwān had done: he was certainly ruthless in

[31] Al-Kindī, *Governors and Judges*, 89.

[32] For Egypt under the early Abbāsids see H. Kennedy, "Central government and provincial elites in the early ʿAbbasid caliphate," *BSOAS*, 44 (1981), 26–38.

hunting down ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz's descendants in the province. However, after the defeat of his brother ʿAbd Allāh's rebellion in 137/754, he turned his attention to Syria, which became the base for his branch of the dynasty.

He was succeeded by four leading members of the Khurāsānī military in turn, Abū ʿAwn (137–141/755–758), Mūsā ibn Kaʿb (141/758–9), Muḥammad ibn al-Ashʿath (141–2/759–60) and Ḥumayd ibn Qaḥṭaba (143–4/760–762). They all used local men as *ṣāḥib al-shurṭa* to maintain contact with the local *jund*. Ḥumayd is said to have brought some 20,000 soldiers with him, but it seems that these were in transit to Ifrīqiya where Muḥammad ibn al-Ashʿath was now in bitter conflict with the Ibādī Kharijites. Among them was al-Aghlab ibn Sālim, whose descendants were to be independent rulers of Ifrīqīya through the third/tenth century until the Fāṭimid conquest of 296/909.

The next governor, Yazīd ibn Ḥātim, held the post for eight years, longer than anyone else in the early ʿAbbāsid period. He was a member of the famous Muhallabī family of Baṣra and he and his brother Rawḥ were also to play an important role in the government of Ifrīqiya. He was one of the Caliph al-Manṣūr's inner circle, and may have been appointed to secure Egypt in the event of an attempted takeover by the ʿAlids. Al-Manṣūr was always aware of the history of the Umayyad Caliphate, and he would have remembered how crucial the control of Egypt had been to both Muʿāwiya and ʿAbd al-Malik when they were establishing themselves as caliphs.

The main ʿAlid rebellions were led by Muḥammad the Pure Soul in Medina and his brother Ibrāhīm in Baṣra in 145/763. It seems that a member of the ʿAlid family had arrived in Fusṭāṭ when Ḥumayd ibn Qaḥṭaba was governor and he had failed to take any action against him. Al-Manṣūr became aware of this and dismissed Ḥumayd. There was no established pro-ʿAlid party in Egypt and the ʿAlid leader, ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh, attracted little support in the province, apart from that of some descendants of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Marwān, the Umayyad governor, who saw it as an opportunity to re-establish their position, and a handful of discontented members of the *jund*. The rebels planned to take over the mosque in Fusṭāṭ and summon the people to their cause, but the plot was soon betrayed to Yazīd, who sent his *ṣāḥib al-shurṭa*, ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muʿāwiya ibn Ḥudayj, to deal with it. There was a short struggle and the conspirators fled, trying to seek refuge in the city. In the end, there were only thirteen deaths, a marked contrast with the battles and bloodshed in Baṣra and Medina at the same time; the alliance of the governor and the local *jund* kept the province secure. This incident shows how the local elite was now bound to the new ruling dynasty. As for ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad, he escaped and his fate was uncertain, but according to one source he was concealed by a leading member of the *wujūh*, ʿAssāma ibn ʿAmr, and died in hiding. ʿAssāma himself was taken to Baghdād and

imprisoned but was released on the accession of the Caliph al-Mahdī and returned to Egypt. His exploits do not seem to have affected the status of his family in the province.

Yazīd ibn Ḥātim was removed from office in 152/769 and the Caliph al-Manṣūr seems to have decided on a new policy for the government of the province. With the appointment of 'Ubayd Allāh ibn al-Ḥabḥāb as financial controler in Umayyad times, the caliphs had been trying to increase the revenue yield of the province. In 141/758 the governor Muḥammad ibn al-Ash'ath had been asked to sign a *ḍamān*, a guarantee that he would be responsible for any shortfall in the reveue from the province. When he refused to do so, the financial administration was entrusted to one Nawfal ibn al-Furāt, who removed the *dīwān*s from the governor's palace. From the appointment of 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Mu'āwiya ibn Ḥudayj al-Tujībī in 152/769 until the arrival of 'Īsā ibn Luqmān in 161/778, the governors were chosen from among the members of the local *wujūh* families, but they were not given charge of the financial administration, which was entrusted to officials sent out from Baghdād; clearly the Caliph intended to break the stranglehold that people of the *dīwān* had on the revenues while continuing to rely on the *jund* for security purposes.

By and large, al-Manṣūr's measures seem to have secured the peaceful government of the province. Under his son, al-Mahdī (158–69/775–85), there were renewed attempts to increase the revenues but his financial demands, coupled with the appointment of unsuitable outsiders as governors, resulted in a major rebedllion against the government. The trouble began when one Diḥyā ibn Muṣ'ab, a descendant of the famous Umayyad governor 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Marwān launched a rebellion in the Ṣa'īd. He is said to have claimed the caliphate for himself, but this was essentially an anti-tax movement. The governor, a minor member of the 'Abbāsid family called Ibrāhīm ibn Ṣāliḥ, failed to respond effectively and was unceremoniously sacked in 167/784. In his place the caliph sent Mūsā ibn Muṣ'ab al-Khath'amī. He had already served as governor of al-Jazīra, where his ruthless taxation policies had led to widespread unrest. He attempted to implement a similar agenda in Egypt, raising taxes on the land and imposing taxes on the *sūqs* and riding animals. He soon alienated all sections of Egyptian society. In the Ḥawf, Qaysī and Yemeni Arabs put aside their ancient feuds and combined against him. They made contact with the *jund* of Fusṭāṭ, who were infuriated by the new taxes on their urban properties and who promised not to fight for the governor. In Shawwāl 168/April 784 Mūsā led the *jund* out to meet the Ḥawfī rebels. As agreed, the *jund* and its leaders abandoned him to his fate, he was killed and the *jund* returned to Fusṭāṭ without striking a blow. There was no clearer indication of the limits of the caliphal government, which simply could not function without the cooperation of the local elite.

The caliph responded by sending a new governor, al-Faḍl ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Abbāsī, with a large army of Syrian soldiers. In a fierce battle at Buwīṭ, Diḥyā and his supporters were defeated. Diḥya himself fled to the western oases where he took refuge with the Kharijite Berbers, but they accused him of favoring the Arabs over them and abandoned his cause, leaving him to be killed by the governor's troops. By the time al-Faḍl ibn Ṣāliḥ left the province the next year, order had been restored.

The accession of Hārūn al-Rashīd in 170/786 inaugurated a period of rapid turnover of governors, few lasting more than a year. In the twenty-three years of his reign, there were twenty-two changes (in contrast to only eight in the twenty-two years of al-Manṣūr's reign). Since almost all the governors were outsiders – members of the 'Abbāsid family or court functionaries who brought few troops with them – they were heavily dependent on the *ṣāḥib al-shurṭa* and the local *wujūh* to enforce their authority. The government in Baghdād, dominated until 187/803 by the Barmakids, was largely concerned with revenues and seems to have been constantly frustrated by the poor yields from Egypt. Various stratagems were tried: in 176/792 a special investigator, 'Umar ibn Mihrān, was sent in disguise to investigate corruption, and his report survives in the accounts of Iraq-based sources such as those of al-Ṭabarī and al-Jahshiyārī,[33] but not the Egyptian al-Kindī. In 183/799 and 185/801, the governor, al-Layth ibn al-Faḍl, was ordered to bring the revenue to Baghdād in person.

Apart from the lack of will in Fusṭāṭ, the main obstacle to increasing revenue was the persistent refusal of the Arab settlers in the Ḥawf to pay anything and the reluctance of the *jund* in Fusṭāṭ to force them to do so. In 186/802 for example, the Ḥawfīs rebelled in protest at what they claimed were corrupt surveyors who had shortened the measuring rods, and threatened to march on Fusṭāṭ. A force of 5,000 *jund* was sent against them but, faced with the enemy, all except 200 deserted without striking a blow. Despite being heavily outnumbered, the governor drove the rebels back; the capital was saved but the Ḥawfīs still refused to pay. In the administrative chaos after the fall of the Barmakids in 183/803, Hārūn seems to have been prepared to allow large-scale tax-farming, one Maḥfūẓ ibn Sulaymān giving a *ḍamān* that he would collect taxes from the Ḥawfīs without using any troops. History does not tell us if he was successful.

The final years of Hārūn's reign saw increased tensions in the province. This was partly a reflection of the widespread insecurity of the period. The Ḥawfī Arabs continued to defy the governor. On occasion Egypt was effectively cut off from Baghdād by unrest in Syria. In 190/806 there was a

[33] Al-Ṭabarī, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr, *Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*, ed. M. J. de Goeje et al. (Leiden, 1879–1901), iii, 626–28; al-Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarā* (ed. El-Sakka), 217–20; see also Grohmann, *Arabic Papyri*, 116, for documentary confirmation.

rebellion in the Aqaba area, and in 193/809 money being sent to Baghdād was intercepted by the people of Ramla in Palestine who took it as their *'aṭā'* which had not been paid. When the governor al-Ḥasan ibn al-Takhtākh left office in 194/810 he had to go through the Ḥijāz because of the disturbed state of Syria.

The death of Hārūn al-Rashīd in 193/809 made matters much worse. He was succeeded by his son al-Amīn, who was almost immediately challenged by his own brother, al-Ma'mūn, governor of Khurāsān. This dispute meant that there was an alternative focus for loyalty to which dissidents could turn. The succession war fought out in Iran and Iraq provided the occasion for the outbreak of a prolonged struggle for power in Egypt.

The political situation in the province had been changing in the last decade of Hārūn's reign. The monopoly of military power enjoyed by the *jund* of Fusṭāṭ was being challenged by newcomers. The failure of the *jund* to suppress the Ḥawfī rebels led the caliph to send troops from the *abnā'* (troops of Khurāsānī origin resident in Baghdad, who formed the backbone of the early 'Abbāsid armies), and when al-Layth ibn al-Faḍl was appointed governor in 183/799 he brought with him a force which included al-Sarī ibn al-Ḥakam. Al-Sarī is said by al-Kindī[34] to have been a man of no importance when he arrived in the province, but he soon established himself as one of the leaders of the *abnā'*.

The other groups of Arabs in Egypt also sought to challenge the power of the traditional *wujūh*. The most successful of these was 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn al-Wazīr al-Jarawī. He seems to have had his power base among the Yemeni tribes of Lakhm and Judhām in the northern part of the country, and in 190/806 he had been one of the commanders sent against the rebels in Aqaba.

Between the death of Hārūn in 193/809 and the reestablishment of the authority of the Caliph al-Ma'mūn by 'Abd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir in 211/826, Egypt was the scene of a prolonged power struggle between these groups. The events are complicated by a number of factors: the attempts of outsiders, like the 'Abbāsid al-Faḍl ibn Mūsā ibn 'Īsā and his family in 198–99/814–15 to establish themselves in the province, the takeover of Alexandria by a group of Andalusī exiles[35] in 199/815, and the constantly shifting political groupings as individual leaders sought to build up their power base.

Several clear trends do, however, emerge from this confusion. Governors continued to be nominated, first by al-Amīn and then, after his death in 198/813, by his brother al-Ma'mūn, but their authority was minimal and they were no more than one player in the complex power politics of the country. By 197/813 Egypt had effectively been divided between 'Abd al-'Azīz al-

[34] Al-Kindī, *Governors and Judges*, 148.

[35] These Andalusīs seem to have left Spain because of discontent with the authoritarian rule of the Umayyad Amīr al-Ḥakam ibn Hishām (180–206/796–822).

Jarawī who had taken control of the north, from Shaṭanūf 30 km north of Fusṭāṭ to Faramā, with intermittent control of Alexandria, while al-Sarī ruled the south, from Fusṭāṭ to Aswān.[36] Both collected the *kharāj* for themselves and acknowledged Caliphs and pretenders to the throne as they wished. A *ṭirāz* of 197/812–13 survives with an inscription saying that it was made by al-Sarī and al-Jarawī on the orders of al-Faḍl ibn Sahl, al-Ma'mūn's wazīr.

The losers in this complex struggle were the old-established *wujūh* and *jund* of Fusṭāṭ. For reasons which are not clear, they seem to have been unable to sustain their power or produce leaders who could challenge al-Sarī and al-Jarawī. In 200/816 most of the leading members of the Banū Ḥudayj, the most distinguished of the old *wujūh* families, perished when their palace in Alexandria was attacked by a mob of Andalusīs and Lakhmī tribesmen, an event which seems to have meant an effective end to their power. In 204/819 al-Sarī had a number of the senior leaders of the *jund* drowned in the Nile "because he was afraid of them."[37] The failure of the old *jund* to establish themselves in power, or even to retain their existing status, marks a major break in the history of early Islamic Egypt. The tightly knit group of *wujūh* who had dominated it since their ancestors had come in the armies of the first conquest was now broken, and it was left to others to struggle over the spoils.

Both 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Jarawī and al-Sarī died in 205/820, but their conflicts were inherited by their sons, 'Alī ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz and 'Ubayd Allāh ibn al-Sarī. Neither was able to achieve any permanent advantage over the other. It was this divided and war-ravaged country which 'Abd Allāh ibn Ṭahir entered in Rabī' I, 211/June–July 826 as governor of the 'Abbāsid Caliph al-Ma'mūn. It was not the first time al-Ma'mūn had attempted to restore the province to 'Abbāsid control: in 206/822 he had sent Khālid ibn Yazīd ibn Mazyad. However, despite the support of 'Alī ibn Jarawī, he had been completely outmaneuvered by 'Ubayd Allāh ibn al-Sarī and was forced to leave the province in humiliation. Ibn Ṭāhir was in a much stronger position, having just restored Syria and Palestine to 'Abbāsid rule. He came with a large military force and brought ships from Syria to help in the amphibious warfare in the Delta.

Ibn al-Jarawī immediately approached him with gifts, and 'Abd Allāh appointed him in command of the ships. Ibn al-Sarī decided to resist but at the same time sent a messenger to the caliph to request an *amān*. The surrender document was negotiated by al-Sarī's secretary Muḥammad ibn Asbāṭ, and witnessed by the most prominent *fuqahā* of the province. He was

[36] Sawīrus, *History of the Patriarchs*, 428. Al-Jarawī's takeover of the Delta area is described in al-Kindī, 151; for the final establishment of al-Sarī's control of Fusṭāṭ, ibid., 161–62.

[37] Al-Kindī, *Governors and Judges*, 171.

then given 10,000 *dīnārs* and sent to the caliph in Baghdād. He never returned to Egypt but lived peacefully in Sāmarrā until his death in 251/865. It remained only to subdue Alexandria where the Andalusīs were still holding out. ʿAbd Allāh sent a large force against them and accepted their surrender on condition that they abandon the city and take no-one or nothing with them. Most of them sailed to Crete, which they conquered and used as a base for raids on the Byzantine Empire.

The conquest of Egypt by ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir marked the beginning of a new phase in the history of the province. It was still ruled by governors but, after 213/829, these ceased to be appointed directly by the caliph. The western provinces were entrusted to "super-governors," members of the ruling family or leading figures in the Turkish military establishment. These seldom visited the province but remained in the capital. From there they sent governors to conduct the administration and send the revenues directly to them. From 213/819 until his accession as caliph in 218/833 the super-governor was al-Maʾmūn's brother Abū Isḥāq (the future Caliph al-Muʿtaṣim). When he became caliph he appointed one of his trusted Turkish soldiers Ashināṣ, who held office until his death in 229/843, when he was succeeded by another Turk, Ītākh. In 235/849, as one of a series of moves to reduce the influence of leading Turks, al-Mutawwakil removed Ītākh, whom he had arrested, and replaced him with his own son, al-Muntaṣir, who remained as "super-governor" until he in turn became caliph in 247/861. There is no evidence that Ashināṣ, Ītākh or al-Muntaṣir ever visited Egypt during his term of office.

Instead, they appointed governors from the ruling class of the Sāmarrā caliphate. They were Arabs, Turks or Armenians by descent, but all of them were outsiders. Terms of office were longer than under Hārūn and three or four years were not uncommon. They continued to appoint *aṣḥāb al-shurṭa*, but these were no longer members of the local elite but soldiers of Turkish or eastern Iranian origin and, like their masters, incomers to the province.

The army ʿAbd Allāh had used to subjugate Egypt was composed of two elements, members of the *abnāʾ* of Baghdād, many of whom took service with the Ṭahirids at the end of the civil war in Iraq, and Iranians or Turks from further east. Alexandria, for example, was governed by Ilyās ibn Asad ibn Sāmān Khūdā from Samarqand, after its conquest. Few of these troops were Arab in origin and none of them were Egyptians. From now onwards Egypt was to be ruled not by a native Muslim elite but by outsiders from far to the east.

ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir governed Egypt for seventeen months. In this period he restored peace and found the resources for a major enlargement of the mosque in Fusṭāṭ. In 212/827 he left for Iraq, leaving his second-in-command, ʿĪsā ibn Yazīd al-Julūdī to govern the province. In 213/829 there was a reorganisation of the high command of the caliphate: ʿAbd Allāh ibn

Ṭāhir went east to succeed his brother as governor of Khurāsān and at the same time the western provinces were entrusted to the overall supervision of the caliph's brother, Abū Isḥāq.

The new regime seems to have been very oppressive in its early stages. The effective exclusion of local people from power, combined with heavy tax demands, assured widespread rebellions in the Ḥawf and Delta regions. As often before, the problems began with the refusal of the Ḥawfīs to pay the *kharāj*. Abū Isḥāq's new governor, 'Umayr ibn al-Walīd, was entrusted with the task of forcing them to do so. In 214/830 he led an army against them. At first things went well and the Ḥawfīs , the Yemenis led by 'Abd al-Salām ibn Abī'l-Māḍī and the Qaysīs led by 'Abd Allāh ibn Ḥulays al-Hilālī, were forced to retreat; they laid an ambush, and the governor and many of his men were killed. His successor, 'Īsā al-Julūdī, was obliged to fortify his dwelling in Fusṭāṭ.

At this stage Abū Ishāq himself decided to take matters in hand, and arrived in Egypt with 4,000 of the much feared Turkish troops he was using to establish his power. This time the Ḥawfīs were soundly defeated and their leaders captured and executed. Nonetheless, as soon as he left, trouble began again. By 216/831 there was a general rebellion of Arabs and Copts combined against the government, an unprecedented alliance of local interests. They chose as their leader one Ibn 'Ubaydūs, a descendant of 'Uqba ibn Nāfi', one of the original Muslim settlers in Egypt and conqueror of much of north Africa. They were opposed by al-Afshīn, one of al-Mu'taṣim's most senior commanders who had come to Egypt to try to recover the treasure allegedly hidden by Ibn al-Jarawī. Afshīn now set out through the Delta and won a series of victories over the opposition there. Everywhere his progress was followed by execution. In Alexandria, which seems to have been the last stronghold of the old elite, the *ru'asā* (chiefs), led by a descendant of Mu'āwiya ibn Ḥudayj, were driven out and their influence destroyed. The military power of the new regime was irresistible, and the Egyptians were forced to accept this alien domination.

In Muḥarram 217/February 832 the Caliph al-Ma'mūn visited the province in person. Apart from Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam when he was consolidating his power, al-Ma'mūn was the only reigning caliph to do so during the two and a half centuries in which Egypt was part of the caliphate. He only stayed for forty-nine days but his visit seems to have marked something of a turning-point. He accused the governor of concealing the true state of affairs from him and of allowing his tax collectors to oppress the people. For Sawīrus, al-Ma'mūn was a just ruler who respected the Christians and put an end to many abuses, but he was sometimes overruled by the evil genius of his brother al-Mu'taṣim. At the same time Afshīn extinguished the last of the revolts: among the Copts, the men were killed and the women and children sold into slavery, while Ibn 'Ubaydūs al-Fihrī was taken and executed. After

this, open resistance effectively ceased and no further rebellions are reported in the next quarter of a century.

When al-Mu'taṣim became caliph in 218/833, he completed the destruction of the early Islamic order. He ordered that all the Arabs be dropped from the *dīwān* and that their *'aṭā'* be stopped.[38] The influence of the *jund* of Egypt had long been in decline, but this move finally destroyed its economic foundation and marked the end of the system that had been in operation since the time of the conquest. There were protests and small-scale disturbances among the Lakhm and Judhām, led by Yaḥyā ibn al-Jarawī. They claimed that the payments were "our right and our *fay'* (i.e. the booty acquired at the time of the conquest)," but they were speaking the language of a vanished age and their protest cut no ice with the 'Abbāsid government of the third/ninth century.

The governors themselves do not emerge as distinctive personalities, though al-Kindī notes, perhaps with sadness, that 'Anbasa ibn Isḥāq al-Ḍabbī (238–42/852–56), besides being respected for his justice and the tight rein he kept on his tax officials, was the last Arab governor of Egypt and the last to lead the people in prayer in the mosque in Fusṭāṭ.[39] It was also during his period of office that the Byzantines began to raid the Egyptian coast again. They took Damietta and captured many Muslims and non-Muslims in 239/853. After the raid was over, the Caliph al-Mutawwakil ordered that the city be fortified.

This assertion of political control from Sāmarrā was matched by the ideological control represented by the *miḥna*, or inquisition, which aimed to force all officials and *fuqahā* to acknowledge the createdness of the Qur'ān. This inquisition was not vigorously enforced under al-Mu'taṣim but with the accession of al-Wāthiq in 227/842, the *qāḍī*, Muḥammad ibn Abī'l-Layth al-Khwārazmī, was ordered to take stern measures against anyone who refused to accept the doctrine of the created Qur'ān. This led to resistance by several leading religious figures supported by popular sentiment which can, perhaps, be seen as an expression of local opposition to 'Abbāsid autocracy. When al-Mutawwakil reversed this policy in 235/850, the unfortunate *qāḍī* was imprisoned and publicly cursed.[40]

This period of comparative peace was brought to an end by a rebellion in 248/862. The rebellion seems to have begun as a protest by the 'Alids against the punitive measures taken against them by the Caliph al-Muntaṣir. On previous occasions the 'Alids had attracted little support in the province, but it seems on this occasion as if their grievances touched a chord in other sections of the population. The chaos in Sāmarrā, where one caliph followed

[38] Al-Kindī, *Governors and Judges*, 193–94.
[39] Al-Kindī, *Governors and Judges*, 200–2.
[40] For the *miḥna* in Egypt and the popular reaction see al-Kindī, 449–67.

another in rapid succession after the assasination of al-Mutawwakil in 247/861, meant that government control weakened rapidly throughout the caliphate at this time.

The rebellion began among the Banū Mudlij, led by Jābir ibn al-Walīd, in Alexandria, but they were soon joined by the surviving remnants of the old *wujūh* and many others, both Christian and Muslim. Soon most of the Delta was in the hands of the rebels, tax collectors were driven out and the leadership was assumed by an 'Alid pretender, Ibn al-Arqaṭ. The governor, Yazīd ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Turkī (242–253/856–867) struggled to contain the rebellion, but it was difficult, even after substantial reinforcements of Turkish soldiers under Muzāḥim ibn Khāqān arrived from Iraq. It was not until Muzāḥim himself took over as governor that Jābir ibn al-Walīd was finally induced to surrender. Shortly after Muzaḥim's death at the beginning of 254/868 news arrived of the appointment of Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn as the new governor. Probably no one at the time realized it, but a new era in the history of Islamic Egypt had begun.

The years since the arrival of 'Abd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir (211/826) had seen the total domination of the political and military life of the province by Turkish soldiers. Not only were the governor and his army Turkish, it was even the Turkish *ṣāḥib al-shurṭa*, Azjūr who ordered the Imām and congregation of the great Mosque in Fusṭāṭ to abandon their ancient practices and adopt new ways introduced from the east. A Persian, armed with a whip, stood by to make sure they did as they were told.[41]

The event is symbolic of the way in which the Muslim population of Egypt had become a subject group which had lost control of its own destiny. The reasons why Egypt did not develop a native political elite at this time, as for example happened in much of Syria, the Jazīra, Yemen or the Maghrib, are not clear. The slow pace of conversion and the determination of the *wujūh* and *jund* of Fusṭāṭ to maintain their exclusive position must have played a part: the Muslim elite could maintain itself against the Copts, but not against the powerful and effective Turkish military organization of the third/ninth century, determined to capture the resources of the country for their alien masters. The collapse of the early Islamic system left a power vacuum. In the rest of the Islamic world, ambitious warlords were rejecting the authority of the strife-torn Sāmarrā government. It was only a matter of time before some ambitious Turkish soldier decided to exploit the resources of Egypt to establish his own autonomous rule.

[41] Al-Kindī, *Governors and Judges*, 210.

4

Autonomous Egypt from Ibn Ṭūlūn to Kāfūr, 868–969

THIERRY BIANQUIS

The emergence of an autonomous Egypt

From 850, the attention of Arab chroniclers ceased to focus on the eastern provinces of the Dār al-Islām, the 'Abbāsids' primary concern for a century. Southern Iraq, potentially so rich because of its high-yielding agriculture, its vast port of Baṣra, its convergence of caravans and riverine navigation (the main route directing the Iranians toward Mecca and the commodities of the Indian Ocean toward the Byzantine markets), was nonetheless shaken by unrest. From 820 to 834 the disturbances engendered by the undisciplined Zuṭṭ, buffalo breeders who had arrived from India during the Sassanid period, compelled the 'Abbāsid caliphs in 222/837 to relocate them in northern Syria, confronting the Byzantines. Subsequently, the general uprising of the Zanj erupted, a rebellion of black slaves imported from Zanzibar to cultivate the southern Iraqi plantations of sugar cane and rice under unbearable climatic conditions. Inspired by an 'Alid pretender, they were initially victorious. The Zanj temporarily occupied Baṣra and, after 255/869, menaced all the fertile agrarian lands of southern Mesopotamia. Although they were vanquished in 270/883, the region's agriculture did not recover from the devastation that was inflicted on it. A group of Ismā'īlī agitators, the Carmatians, had inaugurated their programs of indoctrination in the region of Kūfa around 264/877. After founding a state at Baḥrayn on the southern shore of the Persian Gulf in 286/899, they instigated revolts among the poor peasants of southern Iraq and the Arab tribes of the Syro-Iraqi steppe at the beginning of the fourth/tenth century. Central and southern Iraq were simultaneously threatened from 865 to 900 by the Ṣaffārid revolt, an insurrectionary movement which first appeared in western Iran, and whose leaders were prepared to march against Baghdād itself. The disorders in lower Iraq compromised the primacy of the maritime commercial route toward India, Ceylon and southeast Asia via the Gulf, consequently enhancing the appeal of the land route across Iran, Jazīra and Anatolia known as the "Silk Road."

In Iraq, the demographic explosion of the cities was more a burden than a dynamic growth factor for the economy. The caliphs had already created Sāmarrā, recognizing that the failure of coexistence between a large Turkish army and an urban civil population that was constantly expanding posed insurmountable problems of supply and security. To maintain tranquility, responsible officials of the state had to assure the regular provision of grain, olive oil, sugar, meat and fuel to the bakeries and the public baths for the enormous city of Baghdād. The implications of this formidable demand for media of transport, storage facilities, initial processing of goods and management of their distribution across myriad local markets were intimidating. The activities of merchants would clearly not suffice to meet this demand, and it was therefore necessary for state officials to pressure the governors of Mawṣil and other regional centers in Jazīra and eastern Syria to despatch vast quantities of grain to the capital.

Syria and Egypt witnessed a number of brief military revolts or tribal rebellions during the second half of the ninth century. But the security of property and persons was nonetheless maintained with more assurance than in Iraq. In 827 Crete had been occupied by the Cordobans of Alexandria. In 830 Sicily also came under Muslim domination. From 870 to 960, the Arab navy based in Crete joined with fleets sailing out of Syria to disrupt shipping in the Aegean and Adriatic seas. Arab navigation was reestablished between Syria and Egypt, and between Egypt and the Maghrib and al-Andalus. At the same time, the caravan trade between Aghlabid Ifrīqiya, a region experiencing widespread prosperity, and Egypt expanded significantly. The importance of economic ties between north Africa and the Andalus on one hand, and Egypt, the Arabian Peninsula and Syria on the other, is attested in the fourth/tenth century by the Jewish archives of the Geniza. Such ties indeed predated the Geniza information by a century according to a text of Ibn Khurradādhbih (d. 272/885 or 300/912) that mentions Jewish traveling merchants. The maritime itinerary via the Gulf route, progressively less protected, was therefore abandoned in favor of direct navigation between the Yemen and India. Aden and the Red Sea once again experienced frequent shipping after a depressed period during the Umayyad epoch. On the western coast of the Red Sea, the port of 'Aydhāb, fifteen days' journey from Aswān and thirteen from Qūṣ, is mentioned by al-Ya'qūbī in the ninth century. Later, 'Aydhāb was supplanted by the port of Quṣayr, further north and only three days away from Qūṣ. Via the upper Nile valley and the Oases, Egypt remained in contact with eastern, tropical and equatorial Africa. Imports of black slaves were directed through Qūṣ, where influential merchants were based. Some slaves were destined for civilian domestic service, the *ḥarīm* or work in the vast agricultural projects, while others were reserved for military training, primarily as infantrymen. Gold dust, imported through the same route, bolstered the capacity of the province to

strike coins. The pharaonic tombs were also methodically plundered to garner this precious metal.

The wealth of agriculture in the Nile valley and the Delta, and its high level of productivity assured by Byzantine fiscal institutions whose function had been reorganized in certain details but preserved in its basic forms, served to provide this province with vast and varied resources. Yet the province's daily requirements were not as great as those of Iraq. With the exception of Fusṭāṭ, an important urban center during this period but not of the same size or stature as Baṣra, there were no large cities. Alexandria, Tinnis and Damietta remained only modest port towns by the mid-third/ninth century. Their significant development would occur at the end of the fourth/tenth century; this situation left Egypt with a substantial agrarian surplus that enabled the holy cities in Arabia to be fed. In this way, Egypt influenced public opinion within the Islamic world during the annual pilgrimage. An artisan class skilled in textile manufacture, distributed throughout numerous sites, produced a variety of woven cloths of which the most costly were exported. Through its traveling merchants, Egypt was well informed about the economic and political life of Iraq and the Andalus.

The ʿAbbāsid caliphate in Iraq was hardly more than a symbol. Struggles between its factions steadily intensified. Initiated by the ʿAbbāsids after 750, the process of disbanding the Arab tribal army and professionalizing the military institution – now reserved primarily for peripheral ethnic groups – was vigorously advanced in the decade between 830 and 840. Throughout the second quarter of the third/ninth century, the caliphate in Baghdād (later in Sāmarrā) and its state apparatus were dominated by Iranian or Arab civilians and supported by Turkish military slaves. This palatine elite, part Shīʿite, part Ḥanafite and Muʿtazilite, promoted a policy of expedience that was posited on a rationalist approach to royal rights in the unifying spirit of the Qurʾān. By contrast, the majority of the Arabic-speaking Sunnī *ʿulamāʾ*, Mālikīs and Shāfiʿīs, rigorously defended their influence over society. This influence was based on memorization of minute juridical norms derived from traditions of the Prophet (*Ḥadīth*), myriad and thus beyond regulation. They increased their opposition after the death of the Caliph al-Maʾmūn in 833. The protest of Ibn Ḥanbal against the imposition, in the name of state-sponsored reason, of the doctrine of the created Qurʾān, resonated favorably among the men of the Sunnī mosques, even if they did not accept every extreme literalist opinion held by those who bore the designation *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*.

Abuʾl-Faḍl Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad al-Mutawakkil, caliph after 847, was the first to cede support of the state to Ḥanafism; he sided with Ibn Ḥanbal. His assassination in 247/861 inaugurated a period of weakness on the part of the caliphate and a struggle for power between Arab or Persian viziers

and Turkish amīrs. As with the Praetorian Guard at Rome during the declining Empire, the Turks of the palatine guard installed and deposed the caliphs at their pleasure, taking care to collect at each new oath of obedience (*bay'a*) a higher bonus. It is not possible to analyze Egypt from 868 to 969 without considering politics in Sāmarrā or Baghdād, since the increasing debility of 'Abbāsid central authority provoked the eruption of several provincial revolts. These led to a new style of managing Muslim territories.

The governor of Egypt collected substantial taxes in grain or gold, while his expenses remained modest. He could hasten or delay, direct to whom he wished, or even cancel, the transfer to Iraq of the tribute awaited by the caliph's brother al-Muwaffaq for financing the supression of rebellions. During an epoch that witnessed the professionalizing of warfare and the rising costs of purchasing and supplying military slaves, their horses and arms, this fiscal advantage allowed first Ibn Ṭūlūn and subsequently Muḥammad ibn Ṭughj to occupy the whole of Syria up to the region of Aleppo and the frontier sites, and to impose their conditions on the 'Abbāsids. They were obliged, however, to husband their treasury and to continue to support their army. For after tensions subsided in the east, the 'Abbāsid authority, still militarily effective, attempted to reassert its control over the rich provinces of Syria and Egypt.

The hundred years between 264/868 and 358/969 thus marked a turning-point in the history of Arabic Egypt. Until that time, it was essentially passive, except during the period of 'Uthmān and 'Alī, dominated and colonized by the Arabs – as it had been previously under the Achaemenid Persians, Ptolemies, Romans and Byzantines. During this century, Egypt gradually become a center of power radiating outside its territory, and commanding a position of central authority on his own, the amīr of Egypt finally found himself threatened as well. The numerous members of his family or the governors of his provinces might set off rebellions at any moment. The phenomena that had proved ubiquitous for other power centers: the burden of expenses and the immobility of the central army garrisoned in the capital, made their appearance in Egypt also.

The chronicles that focus on the Arab east from 860 to 970 present a series of violent campaigns led by non-Arab Muslims. These episodes are difficult to follow because of the large number of protagonists involved. Sketchily presented to the reader, most of these men were brutally eliminated, to be replaced by others emerging from the same background of warriors. The conflicts described by the chronicles occurred at every level. At the 'Abbāsid court in Sāmarrā or Baghdād, they either brought together or placed in confrontation the caliph, members of his family, viziers, senior Turkish officers who frequented the palace, or even secretaries of the central administration. In the provincial capitals, the authority of the military governors was contested by the tax farmers or the senior officers appointed

to control towns or districts, as well as by the chieftains of tribes whose territories intruded into their provinces.

'Abbāsid authority was called into question everywhere, and as soon as a local power initially delegated by the caliph became entrenched it took on a separate personality. The image of the *wālī*, the governor who could be readily nominated and subsequently revoked, gave way to that of the amīr, who regarded himself as a legitimate prince and strove to designate his own son as his heir. The amīr refused to acknowledge the central government's authority to dismiss him or to name his successor. From the caliph's entourage to that of the lowest soldier of fortune, loyalty was demanded from subordinates but denied to superiors. Familial competition, either for position or for succession, instigated dangerous conflicts as well. Thus may be explained the minimal duration of certain offices, such as the prefecture of police (*ṣāḥib al-shurṭa*) or even the *qāḍīs* of Egypt, who often held their posts for a few months only. The chroniclers soberly noted these disorders – without revealing the social psychology of the period, or the emotions of these men, their expressions of loyalty, their brotherhood in arms or even the simple camaraderie which could unite them.

One acquires or loses personal political power solely by force. As a temporary and fragile possession, one must take profit from it rapidly to enrich oneself and one's family by exploiting taxation of real estate, confiscating via the *kharāj* the major portion of income from agrarian land. A substantial portion of such gains must, in any case, be expended on the pay of those soldiers who protect this power and who all too often threaten it. The long-term political goal in the Islamic lands became indistinct during this period: power seemed only to function for itself, to appropriate to itself all sources of profit and thus to assure its own perpetuation with no higher purpose.

Egypt, however, proved to be the exception. Ibn Ṭūlūn and his son, Khumārawayh, then al-Ikhshīd and his successor, Kāfūr, openly favored this province and attempted to develop its economic potential – notably its agrarian productivity – by restoring its system of irrigation. They simultaneously sought to enhance the quality of daily life by reforming taxation policies and the operation of institutions in ways favorable to the indigenous inhabitants. A special kind of rapport between the local government of Egypt and its subjects was thereby established. From the end of the pharaonic period, this province had been dominated from a distant capital such as Rome, Constantinople or Ctesiphon, or one nearby but culturally quite distinct, such as the Alexandria of the Ptolemies. From the time of the Arab conquest, Egypt had played a passive role, but between 868 and 969, Ibn Ṭūlūn and his successors radically transformed this state of affairs, and thereby created a powerful autonomous regime. The Fāṭimids would subsequently benefit from their foundation.

The Ṭūlūnids

Ṭūlūn, Aḥmad's father, had belonged to a tribute corps of Turkish slaves sent by the governor of Bukhārā to the Caliph al-Ma'mūn. He became captain of the caliph's elite guard. Born in Ramaḍān 220/September 835 in Muslim territory, Aḥmad had never been a slave. He received his military training at Sāmarrā, his religious instruction at Ṭarsūs in Cilicia where the role of the *ribāṭ* was accentuated by the duty of holy war (jihād) against the Byzantines. The *muḥaddithūn* and men of piety congregated there, attracted by the sums expended by al-Mu'tazz and his mother that guaranteed the subsistence of the *murābiṭūn* in the town.

Exhibiting the physical and moral qualities that had enabled his ethnic group to monopolize senior ranks in the army, Ibn Ṭūlūn distinguished himself above all for his sense of duty by organizing the defense of a caravan that was attacked by Bedouins near Edessa, while his fellow officers in the escort stood by. This episode won Ibn Ṭūlūn the affection of the Caliph al-Musta'īn, who made a gift to him of a female slave who would be Khumārawayh's mother. Ibn Ṭūlūn accompanied the Caliph al-Musta'īn to exile in 251/865, but he was unable, or possibly did not seek, to avert his execution in 252/866.

Having acquired the religious and literary culture worthy of an Arab civil administrator, Ibn Ṭūlūn bestowed the names of Arab tribes on several of his sons. He enjoyed the company of the *'ulamā'*, poets, architects and physicians. He maintained a certain distance with regard to his comrades in arms and was never regarded as a military ruffian. He exhibited a keen political acumen. Exceedingly self-confident, he began to design long-term projects. Capable of concealing his emotions until the moment when he could give them free rein without damaging consequences, he rarely submitted to fits of temper. He withheld his reaction to any aggression directed against him, in order to control the situation and thus to force his rival to fall into the trap he had prepared for him. Then his revenge was swift and terrible. According to the sources, Ibn Ṭūlūn was responsible for the deaths of more than 18,000 persons executed by his order or expiring in his jails.

In 254/868 the Caliph al-Mu'tazz bestowed Egypt as an appanage on Bākbāk, the second spouse of Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn's mother. Having been delegated authority over the country by his step-father, Ibn Ṭūlūn entered Fusṭāṭ on 23 Ramaḍān 254/15 September 868, accompanied by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Wāsiṭī. The arrival of Ibn Ṭūlūn in Egypt was described in the Arabic sources as a propitious event, with reference to the astronomic circumstances of his ceremonial day of entry into Fusṭāṭ and predictions pronounced by a youthful blind seer. This was not the simple installation of a new governor but the first official act of a quasi-sovereign dynasty. Ibn

Ṭūlūn was credited with laying the foundations of a new Egypt, not merely a dependent province of a distant ʿAbbāsid capital but the seat of a new center of political and economic power. All the omens were favorable, as they were a century later when the *qāʾid* Jawhar laid out Cairo for the Fāṭimid Imām.

The governors appointed over Fusṭāṭ bore the title *wālī al-jaysh waʾl-ṣalāt*, overseer of the army and the Friday prayer (*al-jumʿa*). At the same time, they might or might not receive supervision of the *kharāj* – the collection of the country's agrarian property taxes. In general, they immediately appointed a prefect of police (*wālī al-shurṭa*) and a deputy governor of Alexandria. Initially charged with authority only over Fusṭāṭ, *al-qaṣaba* or capital of the province excluding Alexandria, Aḥmad found as incumbent supervisor of the *kharāj* an eminent fiscal secretary. This was Ibn al-Mudabbir Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Rastisānī, who had already completed a lengthy career. Director in Sāmarrā of the *dīwān al-jaysh* under al-Wāthiq, and then administrator of seven dīwāns under al-Mutwakkil, but cast into prison in 240/854, he was subsequently named director of finances in the two Syrian *junds* (provinces) of Damascus (central and southern Syria) and Tiberiad/Urdunn (northern Palestine). Preceding the arrival of Ibn Ṭūlūn, most likely in 247/861, he had assumed the same duties in Egypt. Finding the fiscal yield of the province far too small, he doubled the *kharāj* and the *jizya*, deprived the Christian clergy and monks of their traditional exemptions, and created new taxes – to be collected according to the lunar year (*hilālī*). He also imposed non-Qur'anic tariffs (*maks/mukūs*) on pasturelands, fisheries and beds of caustic soda. He thus was considered the most hated man in Egypt, which explains the escort of 100 young guardsmen who accompanied him on all occasions. Because Ibn Ṭūlūn was henceforth responsible for maintaining order but had refused any cash donation, he demanded that Ibn al-Mudabbir turn his guards over to him. Despite Ibn al-Mudabbir's unpopularity, Ibn Ṭūlūn had to spend four years directing intrigues on the part of his agents in Sāmarrā in order to arrange the transfer of the fiscal intendant to Syria in Ramaḍān 258/July 871. He took the opportunity to rid himself of Shukayr, postmaster of Egypt (responsible for the mail [*barīd*] and information services), and personally assumed collection of the *kharāj* in 259/872.

In 256/869–70 Bākbāk was put to death, and during the summer of 257/871 the appanage of Egypt devolved upon Yārjūkh (alt. Yārūj), whose daughter Ibn Ṭūlūn had married. From this time on, administration over the whole of Egypt, including Alexandria and Barka, was conferred upon the governor of Fusṭāṭ. Ibn Ṭūlūn proceeded solemnly to assume power in Alexandria, the government of which he turned over to his son al-ʿAbbās two years later.

Ibn Ṭūlūn was occupied with suppression of a series of disorders, for which mission he had been appointed. Because of its rapid Islamization and

Arabization, Upper Egypt was marginally controlled by the governor of Aswān. It was also menaced by the Nubians, who had stubbornly remained Christian, by the Budja[1] and by the turmoil surrounding the exploitation of the local gold mines directed by the Banū Rabī'a. After 255/868 the Budja, having converted to Islam, were able to help the Egyptians resist the Nubians. Berber tribes rampaged in the oases that formed the termini for the trade routes to northern and Saharan Africa. The Delta was unsettled by the semi-sedentarized Arab tribes who were grappling with raids by the nomadic Berbers from Libya. An 'Alid, Bughā al-Aṣghar Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Ṭabāṭabā, revolted during Jumādā I 255/spring 859 in the territory between Alexandria and Barka, proclaiming himself caliph. He was captured and executed in Upper Egypt during the summer of 255/869. Subsequently, another 'Alid, Ibn al-Ṣūfī, Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad, a descendant of 'Umar ibn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib fomented rebellions over two years and massacred the inhabitants of Esna at the end of 255/869. Having defeated a Ṭūlūnid general in Rabī' I 256/winter 870, he was forced to seek refuge in the Oases during the spring. In Muḥarram 259/autumn 872 he emerged from his retreat to attack another self-proclaimed chieftain in Nubia, al-'Umarī.[2] Suffering defeat, Ibn al-Ṣūfī ravaged the district of Aswān where he cut down tens of thousands of palm trees. He then sought refuge in Mecca where he was captured and turned over to Ibn Ṭūlūn, who imprisoned him in Fusṭāṭ before allowing his return to Medina. Abū 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-'Umarī, a descendant of the second caliph and the individual who had confronted Ibn al-Ṣūfī, carved out a principality in the vicinity of the Nubian gold mines. Following an encounter that resulted in the rout of the Ṭūlūnid army, al-'Umarī was tolerated in Nubia. He proceeded to sell his gold and slaves in the market of Aswān until his own officers assassinated him. In 260/873–874, Abū Rūḥ Sukun, a former partisan of Ibn al-Ṣūfī, revolted in the oases and made life hard for Ibn Ṭūlūn's cavalrymen. The latter was compelled to offer him a truce (*amān*).

In 261/874–875 the governor of Barka, Muḥammad ibn al-Farāj al-Farghānī, declared his rebellion. The army despatched by Ibn Ṭūlūn achieved no success by soft tactics, and was forced to use siege engines to storm the city. The suppression was moderate, however: Ibn Ṭūlūn displayed great restraint in his dealings with the western limits of his territory. Relations between Egypt and north Africa were enhanced. According to the exaggerated account of Ibn al-Athīr, once lighthouses were built along the coast a message sent from the minaret of the Sabta Mosque on the coast of Ifrīqiya in the evening could reach Alexandria the same night. However, when the Aghlabid

[1] Hamitic-speaking populations partially Christianized and living in the Nubian Nile valley. See *EI2*, "Bedja," I, 1157b, and "al-Ṣa'īd," VIII, 893.

[2] Cf. *EI2*, "al-Ṣa'īd," VIII, 893.

Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad sought to protect a route between Ifrīqiya and the Ḥijāz for commerce and the pilgrimage, he feared that Ibn Ṭūlūn would not permit a sustained continental link across Egypt. He therefore fortified the port of Sousse and arranged a maritime passage via Sicily.

ʿIsā ibn al-Shaykh al-Shaybānī, known as Ibn al-Shaykh, governor of Ramla (southern Palestine) and Tiberiad/Urdunn (northern Palestine), was arrested by his own commander in Damascus for having pilfered from the tribute of 750,000 dīnārs, some three tons of fine gold that Ibn al-Mudabbir during his tenure as fiscal collector in Egypt had sent to Iraq. Ibn Ṭūlūn, while maintaining relations with Ibn al-Shaykh, immediately set about recruiting Greek and black soldiers. He equipped an army in Ṣafar 256/winter 869–870. But since the caliphal establishment announced its displeasure, Ibn Ṭūlūn cut short his march on Syria and returned to Fusṭāṭ in Shaʿbān 256/summer 870. That year, the Caliph al-Muʿtamid appointed an officer, Amājūr, as governor of Damascus. This individual took possession of the city despite an abortive resistance by Ibn al-Shaykh who submitted to accepting a command post in Armenia.

At this time the situation in Iraq was tense. Al-Wāthiq's son, al-Muhtadī, had acceded to the caliphate upon the demise of al-Muʿtazz in July of 869. Pious and energetic, he sought to restore the caliph's authority in the face of Turkish opposition. Relying on the civil administration's backing, he succeeded in removing several Turkish military commanders – in particular the powerful Muḥammad ibn Bughā. The latter's brother, Mūsā ibn Bughā, returned to Sāmarrā with a formidable army, however. After inflicting a defeat upon al-Muhtadī, Mūsā put him to an atrocious death in 256/June 870. Abu'l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn al-Mutawakkil, al-Muʿtamid ʿalā Allāh, succeeded him as caliph. Compelled to reside in Sāmarrā, he never exercised any genuine authority since real power remained in the hands of his brother, Abū Aḥmad al-Muwaffaq, who was serving as viceroy of the eastern caliphate and had been designated his successor. Al-Muʿtamid's son, Jaʿfar, had theoretically received sovereign primacy in the ʿAbbāsid west, notably Syria, but had never in fact managed to command obedience in that province. Based in Baghdād, al-Muwaffaq had to rely on his Turkish generals, and consequently required ready access to all the fiscal revenues of the empire to deal with rebellions: Saffārids in Fars Province (southwest Iran), Zanj in Lower Iraq, Khārijites in Jazīra and Mawṣil, Ḥasanids in the Ḥijāz, Zaydites in Ṭabaristān. He also had to deal with conspiracies plotted against him closer to home, in Baghdād or Sāmarrā. This situation thus facilitated Ibn Ṭūlūn's takeover of Egypt. Indeed, while Syria could be counted on as a refuge into which the caliph might retreat to await a rearrangement of alliances in the aftermath of his defeats following the struggles for power in Iraq, Egypt, because of its distance, enjoyed a greater measure of autonomy with respect to palace intrigues in Baghdād.

During his first eight years in power in Egypt, Ibn Ṭūlūn took advantage of the financial and military dilemmas confronting al-Muwaffaq to extend his sphere of influence and to nurture his autonomy. He ultimately intended to transfer the center of power from the ʿAbbāsid zone to Egypt. Of the 4.3 million dīnārs in fiscal rents collected within Egypt in 263/876, Ibn Ṭūlūn sent 1.2 million to al-Muwaffaq to support his war effort and 2.2 million to al-Muʿtamid. Counting on the Caliph al-Muʿtamid's friendship in return for the tribute he sent him directly and discretely but which he denied al-Muwaffaq, Ibn Ṭūlūn assumed the title of Mawlā Amīr al-Muʾminīn after 265/878.

In 258 or 259/872 or 873, following Yārjūkh's death, the Egyptian appanage devolved upon al-Muʿtamid's son Jaʿfar, the designated future Caliph al-Mufawwaḍ. Beholding al-Muwaffaq occupied with repression of the Zanj revolt, Ibn Ṭūlūn kept Egypt aloof and withheld his allegiance from his new suzerain, who had refused to reconfirm him in his office. In 262/875–876, al-Muwaffaq sought to recruit a volunteer to assume the governorship of Egypt. All the senior officers serving in Baghdād had been secretly bought off by Ibn Ṭūlūn, however, and thus declined his offer. Al-Muwaffaq then wrote a threatening missive to Ibn Ṭūlūn demanding his resignation, which provoked a brusque refusal. Ibn Ṭūlūn proceeded to fortify his frontier towns and coastal ports. Al-Muwaffaq named Mūsā ibn Bughā governor of Egypt and despatched him with a contingent to Syria. Ibn Bughā tarried some ten months at Raqqa, however, and possessing insufficient money to pay his soldiers, he was forced to return to Iraq.

Having performed his initial military service at Tarsus by participating in the jihād, Ibn Ṭūlūn wished to establish himself in this city with authority over Cilicia as a whole, in order to direct its defense against the Byzantines. He requested al-Muwaffaq to confer its command upon him, but the regent predictably refused. However, a series of events had seriously eroded the capacity of the Muslims to hold off the Byzantines, and in 263/876–77 the Caliph al-Muʿtamid therefore pressed al-Muwaffaq to confer upon Ibn Ṭūlūn responsibility for Syria and Cilicia, the frontier districts (*al-thughūr*). He was charged with protection of the Anatolian frontier. Henceforth, Ibn Ṭūlūn regarded Amājūr, ʿAbbāsid governor of Damascus, as his subordinate. When this individual died in 264/877–78, Ibn Ṭūlūn summoned his son and compelled him to acknowledge Ṭūlūnid authority, to which the latter submitted. Ibn Ṭūlūn marched upon Syria himself, appointed Ibn Amājūr commander in Ramla, and then took possession of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo.

Ibn al-Mudabbir had been the fiscal bursar (*ʿāmil*) of Damascus, Tiberiad/Urdunn and Palestine-Ramla since 258/871–872. In 264/877, after occupying Damascus, Ibn Ṭūlūn fined him 600,000 dīnārs and cast him into prison, where he remained until his death in 270/883–84. At the same time,

Ibn al-Mudabbir's brother, involved with the Zanj rebellions from 255 to 270/868 to 883, was arrested in Baṣra, but was able to escape from his jail cell.

Ibn Ṭūlūn retained Amājūr's officers in their posts. He was then forced to subdue the opposition of Sīmā al-Ṭawīl, governor of Aleppo, who had sought refuge in Antioch. Ibn Ṭūlūn mounted an assault on that city, during which the governor was killed, possibly by a woman's hand. Ibn Ṭūlūn then marched on Tarsus, and upon entering the town began preparing for a jihād. The presence of his army in such high numbers caused prices to rise, and the inhabitants of Tarsus proceeded to his camp to demand either his departure or a reduction of his contingent to a few soldiers. Heated words were exchanged. As the incident threatened to escalate, Ibn Ṭūlūn feigned a retreat before the hostility of Tarsus's populace, ostensibly wishing to impress upon the Byzantines the capacity of Tarsus to resist a siege. In fact, he was anxious to return to Egypt where his own son al-ʿAbbās was preparing to revolt. However, reassured by subsequent messages attesting to the solidity of the caretaker regime he had left behind in Fusṭāṭ, he decided not to depart the region before clearly demarcating his territory. After restoring the assets that Sīmā had unjustly seized from the notables of Aleppo and reconfirming the *qāḍī* in his office, he installed his *ghulām* Lu'lu' there in command of an army. He was supported in this venture by Ibn al-ʿAbbās, chief of the Banū Kilāb. He also based another contingent at Ḥarrān. In order to capture the audacious Mūsā ibn Atāmish, who had challenged his progression through the district, Ibn Ṭūlūn was obliged to recruit the service of a Bedouin. This individual devised a stratagem that Ibn al-Athīr, intrigued by its shrewdness, described at length. In 269/ 883, Ibn Ṭūlūn placed Lu'lu', who was already serving as governor of Diyār Muḍar, in charge of Ḥoms, Aleppo and Qinnasrīn. Of the towns occupied by Ibn Ṭūlūn, only al-Qarqīsiyā was retaken by al-Muwaffaq in 268/881. Ibn Ṭūlūn thus had established a principality whose frontiers broadly defined the territory which Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and the Mamlūks would later dominate.

Exploiting the absence of his father, whom he had replaced as the titular head of Egypt, al-ʿAbbās declared open rebellion. Pliable of mind, he was easily manipulated by his military comrades. The steadfastly loyal vizier, al-Wāsiṭī, prior to being bound and carried off as a parcel, had managed to alert Ibn Ṭūlūn who returned in Ramaḍān 265/April 879. Al-ʿAbbās left Fusṭāṭ leading a contingent of 800 mounted warriors and 10,000 infantrymen and absconding with the state treasury. He reached Alexandria and then Barka, where he demanded that the Aghlabid Ibrāhīm III step down in his favor. He claimed to possess a certificate of nomination to the leadership of Ifrīqiya emanating from al-Muʿtamid. Al-ʿAbbās put the town of Labda to sack after routing the army of the Aghlabid governor Muḥammad ibn Qurhub. He besieged Tripoli, but the Ibadite Ilyās ibn Manṣūr al-Nafūsī,

governor of Jabal Nafūsa and Tripoli on behalf of the Rustamid of Tahert, led a force of 12,000 men and defeated him in 266/879–880 or 267/winter 880–81. Having lost all his resources, al-ʿAbbās retreated toward Egypt. He was captured near Alexandria and conducted on a mule back to Fusṭāṭ, where his father ordered him to gouge out the eyes and cut off the hands of his fellow conspirators. This he did, much to Ibn Ṭūlūn's consternation, since he had secretly expected his son's refusal. Weeping profusely, he ordered his son to be lashed and then cast into prison. From this date of 268/881–82, al-ʿAbbās's brother, Khumārawayh, became Ibn Ṭūlūn's successor-designate.

Prior to Ibn Ṭūlūn, only al-Sarī ibn al-Ḥakam ibn Yūsuf al-Balkhī had attempted to establish an autonomous dynasty in Egypt. He had been named governor in Ramaḍān 200/April 816, but was deposed in Rabīʿ I 201/September 816. Reappointed in Shaʿbān 201/March 817, al-Sarī remained in office until his death in Jumādā II 205/November 820. His sons temporarily occupied the position of governor until 211/September 826.

The existence of numerous public ministries (dīwāns) is documented in Egypt prior to Ibn Ṭūlūn's arrival. The texts indicate an administration to deal with the *kharāj* or real estate tax, the *barīd* or postal and information service, a *dīwān al-ahrā'* which managed the public granaries, a *dīwān asfal al-arḍ* that controlled the Delta in 143/761. A *dīwān al-khāṣṣ* (privy fund) may have existed to rearrange the financial services responsible for administering the governor's assets. With regard to the *dīwān al-inshā'*, it possibly preceded Ibn Ṭūlūn although it may have been created by his director of administration, Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Kān (d. 278/891). Ibn Ṭūlūn set up a chancellory in Fusṭāṭ, essentially on the model of Sāmarrā, by exploiting the talents of Ibn ʿAbd al-Kān, four brothers of the Banū al-Muhājir and Ibn al-Dāya. In 266/879, Abū Bakr al-Atrash (the Deaf) Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Mādharā'ī (*nisba* relating to a village in the vicinity of Wāsiṭ) was proclaimed governor of finances in Egypt and Syria. He died in 270/884. His descendants continued to hold the high financial offices in Egypt under Ibn Ṭūlūn's successors and to amass one of the largest personal fortunes of the medieval Arab east. Most of the personnel appointed to these dīwāns had been trained in Sāmarrā. Several heads of financial dīwāns would attain positions of the highest responsibility, but subsequently suffer imprisonment or the obligation of paying steep fines. Some of these amounted to several million dīnārs,[3] levied either under Ibn Ṭūlūn or his successors.

As in Baghdād, members of the great families of viziers and public administrators, most of whom had originated in Iraq, could handle the *qalam* quite well. Later, when Muḥammad ibn Ṭughj wrote to the Emperor

[3] A million gold dīnārs corresponds to approximately 4.25 tonnes of fine gold.

Romanus I, he had several secretaries draw up drafts of letters. He chose the example of al-Najīramī. Throughout the century which is our concern, marriages between families of Turkish or Farghānian militarists and Arab or Iranian viziers frequently occurred. Thus as an example, Abu'l-Fatḥ al-Faḍl Ibn Ḥinzāba, son of Abu'l-Khaṭṭāb Ja'far ibn al-Furāt, supervisor of property taxes in the east, and under al-Rāḍī, fiscal inspector of Egypt and Syria, married the daughter of Muḥammad ibn Tughj and gave to his own son as a second wife the daughter of the *amīr al-umarā'*, Ibn Rā'iq.

Like their predecessors in Iraq, some of these officials were men of letters who wrote poems or histories, but because of their more provincial status, they counted no philosophers among themselves, unlike in Baghdād. They recorded facts, practical affairs and conventional knowledge, but made no inquiries into the ethics of domestic life or of political practice or theory. From Ibn Ṭūlūn's epoch until the end of the Mamlūk period, Fusṭāṭ, and subsequently Cairo, was an, if not the most, important center of Muslim and Arab culture, especially with regard to historical writing. Yet no individual of high stature in rational or speculative thought, philosophy or logic, was mentioned as an Egyptian or as a long-term sojourner in Egypt. Such persons frequently emerged in Baghdād, Syria, Mā Warā al-Nahr (Transoxiana), al-Andalus or other remote Muslim provinces. To be sure, some Jewish thinkers who were born in Egypt – such as Sa'adyā al-Fayyūmī in the ninth–tenth centuries, or al-Mu'izz ibn Maymūn (Maimonides) in the twelfth–thirteenth centuries who spent part of his life in Cairo – attained wide renown in the realm of intellectual endeavor.

Accordingly, the secretary Aḥmad Ibn al-Dāya (b. 245 or 250/859 or 864, d. 330–340/941–951), wrote a history of Ibn Ṭūlūn, subsequently abridged by Ibn Sa'īd, and a history of physicians. Abū Muḥammad al-Farghānī 'Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Ja'far (283–362/895–973) settled in Egypt where he served as a soldier and wrote an appendix, *al-Ṣila*, to the History of al-Ṭabarī. His son, Abū Manṣūr Aḥmad ibn 'Abd Allāh (327–398/939–1007), was born in Egypt and similarly became a senior officer and probably a historian.

Due to the restored security, sound administration and projects undertaken to enhance the irrigation system, the annual tax yield from agrarian land had reached 4,000,000 dīnārs by Ibn Ṭūlūn's demise. A reserve of 10,000,000 dīnārs had been accumulated.

Ibn Ṭūlūn's army allegedly numbered some 24,000 Turkish *ghulāms*, in addition to 42,000 black slaves and free men. In 263/876–877, when he noted that the 'Abbāsid menace was becoming more pronounced, Ibn Ṭūlūn built a war fleet. He began to construct a fortified redoubt on Rawḍa Island between the two bridges to protect his treasury and his wives, although these projects were rapidly engulfed by Nile floods. He had restored the walls of the military port in the city of Alexandria, which was maintained from an

independent budget. He docked his fleet in the Palestinian port of ʿAkka which he also fortified, this last project employing a high level of technical competence and amphibious masonry. It was carried out by the grandfather of the geographer al-Muqaddasī who describes in detail the construction of its docking facilities. By contrast, Qaysariyya, despite its Palestinian location, was left abandoned and covered with sand.

Fusṭāṭ was already an extensive city when Ibn Ṭūlūn established himself there, and it was divided into *khiṭṭa*s, each with its own mosque. The descendants of the Syrian Christians and Jews who had accompanied the numerous Yemenis during the conquest, now largely Islamized, dwelled in the three *ḥamra* that constituted the town's central quarter. It was bounded on the west by the Nile, which was gradually shifting westward. This quarter surrounded the great mosque which had been founded immediately after the conquest, the *Jāmiʿ ʿAmr* or *Jāmiʿ al-ʿAtīq*. To the south were located the heights of *al-Rasad*, to the north the heights of *Yashkur*. To the east, between Fusṭāṭ and the Muqaṭṭam, was the Qarāfa cemetery. The city was divided into two cantons: *ʿamal fawq*, the upper district, consisting of the heights to the south and east, and *ʿamal asfal*, the lower district, embracing the rest. Until the Fāṭimid era, each canton possessed its own administration and police. The ʿAbbāsid governors no longer resided in al-Ḥamrāʾ al-Quṣwā. They had founded, atop a hill to the northeast, *al-ʿAskar*, a military town with a *jāmiʿ al-ʿaskar* or the *jāmiʿ sāḥil al-ghalla* ("the mosque at the quay (on the *khalīj*) for agrarian produce") and a commercial quarter.

The inhabitants of Fusṭāṭ complained to Ibn Ṭūlūn of being disturbed at Friday prayer (*jumʿa*) by the excessive number of soldiers, in particular those who were black. The mosque, packed and cramped within a densely built up area, could not be enlarged or opened to fresh air. Ibn Ṭūlūn therefore ordered the construction in 264/878 of his own great mosque. Work was begun the following year and completed in 266/880. In consequence of the mosque project, the new town of al-Qaṭāʾiʿ was created at the northeastern extremity of the Jabal Yashkur, on the site of abandoned Christian and Jewish cemeteries. The excessive number of soldiers in Baghdād had induced the ʿAbbāsid Caliphs to build Sāmarrā, and Ibn Ṭūlūn followed their precedent. Construction of the mosque allegedly cost 120,000 dīnārs, a sum implausibly small given its scale. Several houses had been placed in trust (*waqf*) to finance the mosque's operations. Ibn Ṭūlūn, and subsequently his son Khumārawayh, installed twelve muezzins, in three groups of four, in a room near the minaret. Both day and night they continuously recited the Qur'ān and sang praises to the Prophet, the *qaṣāʾid*.

The mosque's plan and structure were Egyptian and its bell-shaped capitals were inspired by the ʿAmr Mosque, but Iraqi influence was shown in its use of fired bricks, its decoration with molded or carved stucco and its

utilization of three *ziyāda* (external courtyards), all as in Sāmarrā. The original minaret must have been modeled on Sāmarrā examples, as is the present structure. An attractive dome, no longer extant, supported by two superimposed colonnades, sheltered a font in the center of the courtyard for the performance of minor ablutions. The lavatories and facilities for major ablutions, along with a pharmacy, had been built outside the mosque enclosure wall for reasons of sanitation. The architect was most probably a Mesopotamian Christian, Ibn Kātib al-Farghānī. In order to avoid the common practice of transferring columns from Christian churches, he had false columns carved into the brick pillars. A *dār al-imāra*, or palace of government adjoined the mosque on its eastern side. It was connected by a small door through the *qibla* wall, as was the practice at Baṣra or Damascus.

Ibn Ṭūlūn also founded the *mashhad* of Sayyida Nafīsa and the aqueduct. He built a mosque up on the Muqaṭṭam Heights at Tannūr Fir'awn.

According to al-Maqrīzī, Ibn Ṭūlūn laid out al-Qaṭā'i' on a surface grid of 1,000 plots within an area of one square mile. Each unit of his polyglot army – regular troops, Bedouin allies, Byzantine mercenaries, Nubian infantry, black slaves, Turkish ghulāms and other soldiers of varied origins – was assigned as its residence a *qaṭā'i'* or concession which bore its name. The whole, distributed around the amīr's palace and the great mosque, constituted the *Qaṭā'i'*. A veritable amīral city thus surrounded the religious, political and military complex. The market of money-weighers (*sūq al-'ayyārīn*) brought together drugs sellers and grain dealers, the peas market (*fāmiyyīn*) gathered butchers, vegetable sellers, roasters and spice purveyors, the cooks' market (*ṭabbākhīn*) assembled moneychangers, bakers and confectioners. All these markets were selling commodities of better quality than had the old markets of Fusṭāṭ.

Ibn Ṭūlūn also built a hippodrome and a hospital, *al-bīmāristān*, between 259 and 261/872 and 874. One facility was reserved for men, the other for women; neither slaves nor soldiers were granted access. As for Ibn Ṭūlūn himself, he preferred to reside in the Christian monastery of Quṣayr just north of Fusṭāṭ.[4] Indeed, even though he had at one time imprisoned the Patriarch Shanūda I who reigned between 859 and 880, and Khā'il III, Patriarch from 880 to 890, following Coptic intrigues, Ibn Ṭūlūn and his successors, including the Ikhshīdids, elected to maintain positive relations with the Christians of Egypt. They had suppressed the excessive poll taxes that Ibn al-Mudabbir had imposed on this community.

In the autumn of 269/882, following the repression of al-'Abbās's rebellion, Ibn Ṭūlūn learned that his *ghulām* Lu'lu', whom he had appointed commander of an important military contingent in northern Syria, had been

[4] On this monastery see al-Shabushtī, *Kitāb al-Diyārāt*, ed. Kurkis 'Awwād (Beirut, 1986), 284.

recalled by al-Muwaffaq. He departed immediately for Syria with al-'Abbās in tow and bound in chains, leaving Egypt under the regency of Khumārawayh. The situation at Tarsus also threatened to slip from Ibn Ṭūlūn's control, since in the aftermath of its governor's demise, his replacement, the eunuch Yazmān, was very popular with the inhabitants but refused to acknowledge his suzerain's authority. Passing through Damascus en route to the frontier districts, he received a message from the Caliph al-Mu'tamid, informing him that on the pretext of departing on a hunting expedition, he had surreptitiously departed from Sāmarrā for Syrian territory. Ibn Ṭūlūn decided to await the caliph at Damascus and to conduct him triumphantly back to al-Qaṭā'i'. There he would find a palace and a great mosque whose stature and luxury would rival those of the vast official buildings in Sāmarrā. But al-Muwaffaq, discovering his brother's scheme, despatched a contingent led by Isḥaq ibn Kundāj, the governor of Mawṣil, who was able to defeat the officers escorting al-Mu'tamid at al-Ḥadītha on the Euphrates and to force the caliph's return to Sāmarrā in Sha'bān 269/February 883. Al-Muwaffaq named Ibn Kundāj governor of Syria and Egypt, a post he would never take up.

By achieving sole mastery over Egypt and extending his power in Syria up to the Byzantine frontier, Ibn Ṭūlūn had fulfilled his first two objectives. He endured the failure to achieve his third and most ambitious goal: to install on the shores of the Nile the 'Abbāsid dynasty, which in a prosperous and peaceful setting would regain its original glory. But he tenaciously refused to abandon his hopes. Ibn Ṭūlūn had the governor of Damascus convene the *qāḍīs*, *faqīhs* and *sharīfs* of all Ṭūlūnid territories and assemble them in a congress most probably held in the glorious Umayyad Mosque. The Egyptian delegation, comprising nine individuals of premier rank and an entourage of less distinguished persons, was headed by Bakkār ibn Quṭayba. This man was an Iraqi Ḥanafī with an austere demeanor of high reputation who had served as *qāḍī* of Egypt since 248/862–863. *Khuṭbas* were pronounced from all the minbars of the principality, luridly depicting the disarray and disgrace of the Caliph al-Mu'tamid who languished, confined as a prisoner, and the treason of Abū Aḥmad al-Muwaffaq who had defied the conditions of his *bay'a* or oath of loyalty that he had sworn to his brother. Before these senior authorities on Islam assembled in Damascus during the spring of 269/883, Ibn Ṭūlūn demanded that they proclaim the jihād against al-Muwaffaq and thereby obliged the 'umma' to deny its pledge of his enthronement. He managed to obtain a general agreement among the participants, but the *qāḍī* Bakkār, with the support of two Egyptians, refused to pronounce it formally since he claimed to be insufficiently informed. In fact, even despite the texts' silence on this issue, the obligation of jihād could not be invoked in a conflict among Sunnīs, since the dispute did not weaken the capacity of the *Dār al-Islām* to confront non-Muslims or

heretics. Thus it was al-Muwaffaq rather than al-Mu'tamid who defended, arms in hand, public order in Iraq. Ibn Ṭūlūn, so close to his goal, had failed once again.

However, the convention of so large a body of senior mosque functionaries and legal practitioners to attempt to reach a consensus on policy was an innovation, an act unique since the 'Abbāsid Revolution. It is no coincidence that it was assembled at Damascus, for here under al-Mu'āwiya a tradition had been inaugurated of an exchange of opinions about the distribution of Muslim authority between the caliph and his advisors at the *jum'a*, which included women, that occurred every Friday at the conclusion of prayer. The public call for the views of civilians with regard to political matters rarely occurred in the eastern Arab world after 750. There were exceptions, at the beginning of the fifth/eleventh century on the occasion of the Caliph al-Qādir's denunciations of the Fāṭimids, and at the end of the sixth/twelfth century on the occasion of Caliph al-Nāṣir's desperate attempt to salvage the unity of Islam from the threat of its appropriation by non-Arab militarists.

Al-Muwaffaq, informed of the Damascus congress, ordered the proclamation from all 'Abbāsid minbars of the following statement: "Almighty God, Confounder of a malediction that will promote the erosion of his power and denigrate his renown, make of him [Ibn Ṭūlūn] an example for those who will come after, for You will not permit the Scheme of Corrupters to succeed!"

Despite his previous triumphs, Ibn Ṭūlūn suffered an extremely onerous final year. He had appointed 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Fatḥ with authority over Aleppo in place of Lu'lu', who, on the side of al-Muwaffaq, fought brilliantly against the Zanj. Ibn Ṭūlūn wished to drive Yazmān from Tarsus, and placed the city under siege in the autumn of 270/883. Yazmān diverted part of the Baradān River, inundating the Egyptian camp. Ibn Ṭūlūn retreated to Adana and then Massissa. There he became ill and was taken back to Egypt in a wheeled vehicle (*'ajala*), a remarkable medium of transport for the period, arriving at Fusṭāṭ in a serious condition at the end of the year 883. He gave orders for the imprisonment of Bakkār and the verification of the *qāḍī*'s accounts. This individual was responsible for managing the assets of widows and orphans and controlling the charitable trusts (*awqāf*) as well as the striking of coinage. Ibn Ṭūlūn named a new judge, Muḥammad ibn Shādhān al-Jawharī, and conferred supervision over the *awqāf* or *ḥubus* upon the prefect of police, Saray ibn Sahl. Finding Bakkār culpable of no embezzlement since he had scrupulously accounted for all the sums that Ibn Ṭūlūn had remitted to him over fifteen years, Ibn Ṭūlūn ordered his release. But the aging *qāḍī*, now gravely ill himself, had no desire to leave his prison cell. Ibn Ṭūlūn's condition worsened. Muslims, Christians and Jews, including women and children, converged separately

upon the flank of the Muqaṭṭam to implore God to save him. He died in Fusṭāṭ on the tenth of Dhu'l-Qa'da 270/10 May 884, eleven-and-a-half months after the congress of Damascus, and less than sixteen solar years after his solemn entry into the city.

The government of Egypt by Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn was a pivotal act that affected the history of Egypt for centuries to come. For the first time in the Islamic world a Turkish general created an autonomous dynasty that was solidly anchored in a province. He appropriated the limited authority delegated to him by the caliph as an appanage holder in order to realize its full potential. He did so less for military purposes than for an intelligent manipulation of politics in the Arab east. He remained loyal, and Ṭūlūnid coins that were struck at Fusṭāṭ, Ramla, Aleppo, Antioch and probably Damascus, bore the caliph's name. He administered a province which, despite the period's indistinct grasp of the Orient's ancient past, exhibited many pharaonic manifestations attesting to the extreme antiquity of its civilization, comparable with that of Mesopotamia. His amirate's most notable characteristic was the quality of relations it maintained with Christians and Jews, and the position held by Jerusalem. Under the Ṭūlūnids, Syro-Egyptian territory was deeply imbued with the concept of an extraordinary role devolving upon Jerusalem in Islam as al-Quds, Bayt al-Maqdis or Bayt al-Muqaddas, "the House of Holiness," the seat of the Last Judgment, the Gate to Paradise for Muslims, as well as for Jews and Christians. In the popular conscience, this concept established a bond between the three monotheistic religions. If Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn was interred on the slope of the Muqaṭṭam, 'Īsā ibn Mūsā al-Nāshārī and Takīn were laid to rest in Jerusalem in 910 and 933, as were their Ikhshīdid successors and Kāfūr. To honor the great general and governor of Syria, Anūshtakīn al-Dizbirī, who died in 433/1042, the Fāṭimid Dynasty had his remains solemnly conveyed from Aleppo to Jerusalem in 448/1056–57.

During the reign of Ibn Ṭūlūn, Theodore, Patriarch of Jerusalem, praised him for his benevolent exercise of power. According to Moshe Gil, it is possible that a Christian had been appointed governor of Ramla.[5] The situation began to change in the fourth/tenth century, after the fall of the Ṭūlūnids. Conflicts between Muslims and Christians in Jerusalem multiplied, with Jews occasionally taking the Muslims' side. Especially after 960, when the Byzantines were defeating Muslims in Cilicia and northern Syria and had regained Cyprus and Crete, Muslim antipathy toward Christians erupted in Antioch and Fusṭāṭ. In 355/966, the Patriarch of Jerusalem was executed by the Kāfūrid governor. Conditions became graver still at the outset of the fifth/eleventh century, when the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Ḥākim, alert to the rancor of Sunnīs in Fusṭāṭ and seeking to force his vision of religious unity

[5] Moshe Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634–1099* (Cambridge, 1992), 348.

on his subjects whether they wished it or not, severely persecuted Christians and Jews. He changed his attitude prior to his death, and permitted the return of Muslim converts to their former religion, restoring a portion of their confiscated possessions. The Dhimmīs' condition revived so rapidly that their restored status provoked a reaction among the 'Abbāsid Sunnīs in Baghdād, less tolerant than their counterparts in Fusṭāṭ. Indeed, a substantial portion of the wealth generated in Egypt and Syria could have been produced only because of the harmonious division of economic activities among the diverse communities.

Between Iraq, progressively more oriented toward Iran, and al-Andalus, confronted by militant Christian chivalry, Ibn Ṭūlūn had created a new zone of power facing Constantinople in the eastern Mediterranean. The abortive attempt by his son al-'Abbās, despite its failure, substantiated the inclusion of Libya and Ifrīqiya within the southern region of the central Mediterranean. In the future, either Egypt would penetrate north Africa or, conversely, there would be an invasion of Egypt from the west. Ibn Ṭūlūn contributed to a process that, over the course of several centuries, separated the former Byzantine lands once again. Egypt, Syria, western Jazīra, and Cilicia were divided from the former Sassanid territories of Iraq and Iran – all of which Islam had sought definitively to unite during the first/seventh century.

For this grandson of a nomad from the steppes of central Asia, founding a new capital between the pyramids and the Muqaṭṭam that could rival Baghdād accomplished a grandiose ambition. From his perspective, Ibn Ṭūlūn had fulfilled the essential objective of the Arab conquest: he had reunited immense regions, diverse ethnic groups, venerable religions, and complementary economies to form a new urban-based civilization that was viable without being standardized, and was ready to accommodate the harmonious integration of its identities and differences.

Following the death of Ibn Ṭūlūn in 270/884, his son Khumārawayh, who was born in Sāmarrā in 250/864, succeeded him without requesting the caliph's endorsement. His brother al-'Abbās was executed, quite probably by his order, immediately before his assumption of power. This was the first time in 'Abbāsid history with regard to the government of so large and rich a territory that a *wālī*, whose legitimacy derived from the caliph who had designated him, was succeeded openly by an amīr who claimed his legitimacy by inheritance. Khumārawayh's designation by his father as his successor had rendered any caliphal confirmation irrelevant in his eyes. Moreover, Ibn Ṭūlūn had left 10,000,000 dīnārs in the public treasury, a sum that facilitated the peaceful accession of his son.

But the regent al-Muwaffaq elected to take advantage of the transition to restore Egypt and Syria within the 'Abbāsid orbit, and in particular to recoup unpaid tribute. He had been encouraged to pursue this goal by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Wāsiṭī, the loyal Ṭūlūnid general who none-

theless betrayed the dynasty. Several contingents commanded by Isḥāq ibn Kundāj and Muḥammad ibn Abi'l-Sāj entered Syria where they were joined by the army of Aḥmad ibn al-Muwaffaq, the future al-Mu'taḍid. At the Battle of the Mills in Palestine during 271/winter 885, Ibn al-Muwaffaq and Khumārawayh took flight in opposite directions. But Sa'd ibn Aysar, the Ṭūlūnid commander, held his composure and won the battle. In consequence of his ignominious performance, Khumārawayh was thereafter continually obliged to prove his personal bravery to an ever-greater extent. He created a multi-ethnic army in which alongside the Turks served blacks, Iranians, Greeks and an elite bodyguard, *al-mukhtaṣṣ*. This last unit was recruited from the most obstreperous Bedouin of the Delta and was augmented by black slaves. Its loyalty to the amīr was unquestioned.

Khumārawayh conferred the custodianship of finances on the family of al-Mādharā'ī, who would perform the same function under the Ikhshīdids. He regained the support of Ibn Kundāj and Ibn Abi'l-Sāj, took control over most of the Jazīra and compelled Yazmān, master of Tarsus, to acknowledge him as suzerain. His domain thus exceeded his father's. In 273/886, a peace treaty was concluded between Khumārawayh and al-Muwaffaq, who agreed to recognize the Ṭūlūnids' right to govern Syria and Egypt for thirty years. To improve relations between Egypt and Syria, Khumārawayh improved the roadway through the pass (*'aqaba*) that permitted entry to the Jordanian plateau from Ayla.

Upon al-Muwaffaq's demise in 278/spring 892, al-Mu'tamid proceeded to Baghdād to exercise his caliphal authority. But al-Muwaffaq's son, Aḥmad al-Mu'taḍid, continued to hold power. Al-Mu'tamid died in 279/autumn 892. Al-Mufawwaḍ, his son and heir-designate, who had served as governor of the west, was readily eliminated by al-Mu'taḍid billāh. The new caliph recognized the Ṣaffārids in Khurāsān as sovereign in Fars and later Rayy, and subsequently the Ṣāmānids in Transoxiana after 900. With no hope of vanquishing Khumārawayh militarily, al-Mu'taḍid was obliged to tolerate Ṭūlūnid autonomy in Egypt, Syria and along the Anatolian frontier. Concentrating his efforts henceforth on Iraq and its periphery, he reoccupied Isfahān in western Iran, and drove Ibn al-Shaykh from Mawṣil. A large portion of the eastern Jazīra was regained from Khumārawayh.

A new accord was reached with the caliph in Rabī' I 280/spring 893. Khumārawayh and his descendants received for three decades the right to direct Friday prayer (*al-ṣalāt*), to levy the land tax (*al-kharāj*), and to appoint judges and civil/fiscal administrators (*al-quḍā' wa jāmi' al-a'māl*) for their amirate, which now extended from Hīt on the Euphrates to Barka in Libya. The accord decreed as compensation to the 'Abbāsid caliph an annual tribute of 200,000 dīnārs cumulatively calculated for those previous years in which none had been turned over, and 300,000 dīnārs per annum for future years. Khumārawayh surrendered the Diyār Rabī'a and the Diyār

Muḍar surrounding Rāfiqa. The caliphal workshops for fine textiles (*ṭirāz*) in Fusṭāṭ and Alexandria were to continue production for the ʿAbbāsid caliph.

In 272/892, the Caliph al-Muʿtaḍid married Qaṭr al-Nadā, "Dew Drop," Khumārawayh's daughter. He provided her with a dower of 1,000,000 dināṛs, a wedding gift that was considered the most sumptuous in medieval Arab history. Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Jawharī Ibn al-Jaṣṣāṣ, broker in jewelry to Khumārawayh's *ḥarīm*, negotiated Qaṭr al-Nadā's marriage to the caliph. Having held her gems on deposit, he enriched himself upon the princess's death, which occurred shortly afterwards, and was forced to pay a fine of several million dināṛs. He died much later in 315/927.

Khumārawayh now imagined himself almost as the caliph's equal. Moreover, one of the greatest and quintessentially Arab poets of the age, Abū ʿUbāda al-Buḥturī, who had been an intimate of every caliph from al-Mutawakkil to al-Muʿtaḍid, entered into a close relationship with him in 279/892. In contrast with the demeanor of numerous *ghulāms* and mamlūks later on, the inclination of Ibn Ṭūlūn and his son toward Arab civilization and literature was immediate and profound.

Nonetheless, the luxury and dissipation indulged in by Khumārawayh ultimately overwhelmed him, and he was assassinated in Damascus in Dhu'l-Qaʿda 282/January–February 896 by his court eunuchs, who had taken advantage of his absence to satisfy the insatiable sexual appetites of his harem women. He left an empty treasury, the dīnār having lost a third of its value as a result of his excessive prodigality. He had lived in luxury, and was rumored never to have mounted the same horse twice.

The decline of the dynasty accelerated under the rule of his two sons, Jaysh and Hārūn. Abu'l-ʿAsākir Jaysh ibn Khumārawayh was only fourteen when he acceded in 282/early 896, but he was already a drunkard. He put to death his uncle, Muḍar ibn Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn, under the lash. Several months later, in 283/July 896, the *faqīhs* and the *qāḍīs* of the realm declared his deposition and he died in prison.

Confronting the decadent Ṭūlūnid amirate, the ʿAbbāsid regime regained a measure of its former authority. Al-Muʿtaḍid, caliph after 279/spring 892, sealed the definitive return of the caliphate to Baghdād. He was served as vizier by ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Sulaymān ibn Wahb, and after his death in 288/901 by his son al-Qāsim. The faithful Badr al-Muʿtaḍidī was in command of the army. The Shīʿī family of the Banu'l-Furāt, followed by the Sunnī house of the Banu'l-Jarrāḥ, administered the taxes of Iraq. Al-Muʿtaḍid, named caliph from 278/June 892, died in 289/902; his reign was relatively brief but effective. The caliphate nonetheless was forced to deal with a new threat more terrible than it had faced from the Zanj: the Carmatian revolt.

Around 261/874 a group of Ismāʿīlīs in the *sawad* of Kūfa gathered behind a missionary, Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ, who preached the resumption of a

radical assault on the urban civilization of the ʿAbbāsids. The Pilgrimage was denounced as a resurgence of Meccan idolatry focused on the Black Stone of the Kaʿba, an idolatry that Muḥammad himself had formerly attacked. The enrichment of urban elites and the impoverishment of peasants and Bedouin were imputed to a deviation from Islamic doctrine that was linked to the abandonment of the legitimate political primacy of the descendants of ʿAlī and Fāṭima. After 284/897 the Carmatian revolt directly threatened ʿAbbāsid power in lower Iraq, the *sawad* of Kūfa, and subsequently in Baḥrayn. The rebels inflicted a serious defeat on the ʿAbbāsids in 287/900. The movement endorsed the Fāṭimid family of ʿUbayd Allāh, which depicted itself as issuing from the Ḥusaynid ʿAlid Sharīfs who derived from the seventh Imām Ismāʿīl, son of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq. The Fāṭimids settled first in Syria, at Salamiyya at the edge of the steppe traversed by the tribes that had converted to Carmatianism. In 286/899, they broke away from the power center established by the Carmatians at al-Aḥsā' in Baḥrayn on the southeastern Gulf.[6] Because their existence was threatened in Salamiyya, they later passed by stealth through Egypt to settle anonymously in southern Ifrīqiya, modern Tunisia, where they set up a counter-caliphate in opposition to the Aghlabids in 297/909–10.

Throughout the final years of the third/ninth century the Carmatians harassed the towns, zones of sedentary agriculture and the caravan traffic in the Gulf, lower Iraq and Syria. Every governor of a Muslim province had to guarantee its security. The Carmatians, who quite probably prayed for a time toward Jerusalem, now launched an expedition into Syria. In 289/902, having defeated near Raqqa Ṭūlūnid troops under the command of Ṭughj ibn Juff, governor of Damascus, the Carmatians besieged the Syrian capital and refused to desist until they were paid tribute. After their leader, Ṣāḥib al-Nāqa, was killed, a new chief, al-Ḥusayn Ṣāḥib al-Shāma, induced them to ravage Ḥomṣ, Ḥamā, Baʿlabakk, Maʿarrat al-Nuʿmān, and Salamiyya, where they massacred ʿUbayd Allāh's family. Only at Aleppo were they finally brought to bay. The impotence of the Ṭūlūnid Dynasty prevented the imposition of any measure to preserve order. From the ʿAbbāsid perspective, Syria's defense depended on the replacement of the Ṭūlūnids. A dynamic response was imperative.

Following the Carmatians' ravages in Syria, the Caliph al-Muktafī dispatched Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Kātib to Ḥomṣ. The ʿAbbāsid navy won out over the Ṭūlūnid fleet stationed at Dumyāṭ and Tinnīs. Subsequently, an ʿAbbāsid squadron over which al-Muktafī had placed the same

[6] See Farhad Daftary, "A Major Schism in the early Ismāʿīlī Movement," *SI*, 77 (1993), 123–39, which presents the current state of the question, and bibliography. For an alternate point of view see Thierry Bianquis, "L'Espace ismaïlien et le régime du vizirat militaire en Égypte, le Yémen sulayhide et l'Ifriqiya ziride," in J.-C. Garcin (ed.), *Clio, États, sociétés et cultures du monde musulman médiéval* (Paris, 1995), 81–117.

Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān, crushed the Carmatian force at Raqqa in Muḥarram 291/on November 29, 903. The senior Carmatian leaders were executed in Baghdād two months later. After the fall of the Ṭūlūnids in 293/906, the Kalb tribe, under the Carmatian Abū Ghānim Naṣr, attacked Damascus after pillaging Bosra, Der'a, and Tiberiad. Naṣr was ultimately killed and Carmatian operations in later years continued at the expense of the Euphrates valley.

Abū Mūsā Hārūn ibn Khumārawayh had succeeded his brother Jaysh while still under the age of fourteen. His uncle, Rabī'a ibn Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn, and his soldiers had rebelled in Alexandria with Berber support. Defeated and captured, Rabī'a was executed by lashing in Fusṭāṭ in Sha'bān 284/autumn 897. Since Ṭūlūnid debility was obvious, the 'Abbāsid caliphate intervened in Cilicia to resurrect its administration over the Thughūr and the Jazīra. Henceforth, it exacted an annual tribute of 450,000 dīnārs.

Two other sons of Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn, 'Alī and Shaybān, united against their nephew Hārūn and killed him while he was drunk in Ṣafar 292/December 904. He was only twenty-two, but had reigned for almost nine years. Shaybān assumed power and returned to Fusṭāṭ. Ṭughj ibn Juff, in consort with other officers, revolted in the aftermath of Hārūn's murder, and appealed to Muḥammad Sulaymān, a former secretary (*kātib*) of Lu'lu', Ibn Ṭūlūn's *ghulām*. They escorted Muḥammad to Fusṭāṭ. In Ṣafar 292/January 905, Shaybān abandoned his soldiers by night. Fusṭāṭ had to be surrendered to the victorious 'Abbāsid troops who razed al-Qaṭā'i' to the ground, with the exception of Ibn Ṭūlūn's great mosque. The destructive rage of the 'Abbāsid soldiers is doubtlessly explained by the affluence of the nouveaux riches who had erected the recent districts of Fusṭāṭ while Baghdād had already begun its decline. 'Isa ibn Muḥammad al-Nūsharī was appointed governor of Egypt.

At the conclusion of his discussion of the Ṭūlūnids, Maqrīzī inserts a nostalgic text evoking their splendid military processions and the luxury that Fusṭāṭ had enjoyed under their patronage.[7] The district of al-Qaṭā'i', before its second destruction under al-Mustanṣir, would contain tens of thousands of houses, gardens and orchards.

[7] See G. Wiet, *L'Égypte arabe*, vol. 4 of Gabriel Hanotaux (ed.), *Histoire de la nation égyptienne* (Paris, 1937) 80–179, and Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ* (Cairo, 1270 AH), 1, 612: "During the night of the Fiṭr in the year 292/July 905, its events recalled how this evening was celebrated under the Ṭūlūnids: parades, handsome uniforms, magnificent arms, multicolored banners, flags streaming, numerous cavalry, the sound of trumpets, rolling of drums. The secretary Muḥammad ibn Abī Ya'qūb fell asleep convinced that the realm, the reign and the elegance had disappeared [from Egypt] along with the House of Ṭūlūn. After the total destruction of the district of al-Qaṭā'i' under al-Mustanṣir, Abu'l-Khaṭṭāb ibn Daḥiyya wrote that the number of dwellings that had vanished then counted more than 100,000 structures, each surrounded by gardens and orchards."

The Ikhshīd-Kāfūrid regime

From 292/905 to 323/935, after the collapse of the Ṭūlūnids and before the entrenchment of al-Ikhshīd at Fusṭāṭ, Egypt was officially under the direct control of the ʿAbbāsids in Baghdād. The country suffered a continuous series of disorders. Insecurity was so rampant that in 300/912, ʿIsā ibn Muḥammad al-Nūsharī had to lock the Mosque of ʿAmr except for prayer hours because the *bayt al-māl*, or public treasury, had been deposited there. Indeed, the mosque was the site for reconstituting the *dīwān al-māl* under the direction of the fiscal supervisor, Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Mādharā'ī. This public building was also the locale for auctioning the tax-farms and thus housed considerable sums. Probably for the same reason of insecurity, the Festival Prayer, which heretofore had been celebrated in the Muṣallā outside the town, was for the first time, at the outset of the fourth Hijra century, recited at the Mosque of ʿAmr.

The cause of such widespread unease was the perennial difficulty of paying the soldiers, since the tribute now left the country for Iraq. Moreover, the troops pillaged the property of civilians, who requested that their barracks be transferred to Giza on the western shore of the Nile, ostensibly to confront the principal danger, that of an attack by the Berber nomads or the Fāṭimid armies. Some Berbers had been incorporated into the ʿAbbāsid army stationed in Egypt. Disputes sporadically erupted between different military corps, strife that presaged the fundamental hostility between "easterners" and "westerners" that would so compromise the effectiveness of the Fāṭimid army. Incapable of guaranteeing the soldiers' regular stipends, the regime resolved upon apportioning *iqṭāʿāt* from Egypt's agrarian land. These were fiscal districts from which the *kharāj* was allotted to a particular officer who then paid and equipped his soldiers with the revenues. Certain secretaries and viziers were also granted *iqṭāʿāt* to guarantee the sums they forwarded to the state dīwāns. They also managed to amass fortunes exceeding several hundred thousand dīnārs, if not millions. The regime routinely tapped these fortunes through fines and confiscations to restore monies to the public treasury that should never have been removed from it. To escape such reprisals, the financiers resorted to placing their estates in pious trusts (*awqāf*), protecting them in the name of divine charity against the bureaucrats' malevolence. These two institutions – the *iqṭāʿāt* and the *awqāf* – augmented the revenues withdrawn from the countryside on behalf of the urban populace, leaving no medium available for the development of agrarian capitalism. They prevented the free movement of the economy and paralyzed the state's capacity to act.

It is pointless to list in detail events whose sequence is difficult to reconstruct. Sources such as al-Kindī and Ibn al-Athīr differ on the number

of names and the dates of governors after 905.[8] Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān stepped down on behalf of a governor appointed from Baghdād. ʿIsā ibn Mūsā (or ibn Muḥammad) al-Nūsharī, compelled to seek refuge in Alexandria, abandoned Fusṭāṭ to a rebel named Ibrāhīm al-Khalanjī. Aḥmad Kayghalagh or Kayghulugh, a brilliant officer sent from Baghdād against this individual, was defeated and departed to combat the Byzantines successfully on the Cilician frontier. Al-Khalanjī recruited new soldiers from the jails of Fusṭāṭ.

In 293/905–06, the Caliph al-Muktafī decided to take the field himself against Egypt but, upon his arrival at Takrīt he learned that al-Khalanjī was being sent to him as a prisoner and he returned to his palace. ʿIsā al-Nūsharī subsequently had to deal with a pro-Ṭūlūnid rebellion instigated by Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Khalij. This insurrection brought on pillaging and destruction in Fusṭāṭ and its environs, aggravated by a serious food shortage. The Aghlabid Ziyādat Allāh then arrived at Fusṭāṭ in 297/May 909, having been forced from his amirate by the Fāṭimids. He found a sparse reception and departed for Baghdād, but died in Palestine in 912 before he could prepare for an attempt at reconquering his principality.

Al-Nūsharī died in 297/May 910 and was interred in Jerusalem. He was replaced by Takīn, a Turkish freedman. In 301/913–14, the policy of bestowing appanages was temporarily resumed in Baghdād. Al-Muqtadir's son, Abu'l-ʿAbbās, the future al-Rāḍī billāh, at the age of four received north Africa, which in reality was occupied by the Fāṭimids, and Egypt over which he delegated his authority to Takīn. This individual had to deal with the first Fāṭimid attack in 914. A new prefect, Dhakā al-Aʿwar, the One-Eyed, succeeded Takīn at the beginning of 915. The general Mu'nis, having arrived from Iraq, was victorious against the Fāṭimid armies, for which he merited the *laqab* of al-Muẓaffar. Dhakā and his son, each named al-Muẓaffar as well, proceeded to restore Alexandria in 916. Dhakā died of an illness during the second Fāṭimid invasion in September 919. The Fāṭimids' presence induced Takīn to return in January 920. Mu'nis came back himself in May of 920 with 3,000 men and proved victorious once again in June 921. He dismissed Takīn and named Hilāl, who was supplanted by Aḥmad ibn Kayghulugh in July 923. This Aḥmad was also a brilliant officer but he was compelled to confront a revolt by his soldiers, who had not been paid.

Takīn was appointed governor for a third time in April 924. Insecurity was now so widespread that he performed his prayers in the governor's palace, since the mosques of ʿAmr and al-ʿAskar were too dangerous. Takīn died in March 933 and was buried in Jerusalem. His son Muḥammad was driven out by the troops. A former protégé of Takīn, Muḥammad ibn Ṭughj,

[8] See the attempt to construct a coherent summary by Wiet, *L'Égypte arabe*, 111–36, and the contrasting listings of these individuals in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

was appointed his successor but could not assume his office since it had been preempted by Aḥmad ibn Kayghulugh. The army split into factions, one supporting Ibn Kayghulugh, the other endorsing Muḥammad ibn Ṭughj. Ibn Kayghulugh ultimately stepped down, to be replaced by Ibn Ṭughj who had been appointed a second time; by conducting an amphibious operation he had succeeded in forcing his rival's submission. This period was extremely unsettled because of external events, most notably the Carmatian robbery of the Ka'ba Black Stone of Mecca in January 930 and the struggle in Baghdād between Mu'nis and the Caliphs. Al-Qāhir had Mu'nis put to death in April 934.

Alongside the military governors, the civilian tax administrators played an important role. Abū 'Alī al-Ḥusayn al-Mādharā'ī, known as Abū Zunbūr, served as director of finances in Egypt and later in Syria, following the reconquest. Dismissed and recalled to Baghdād in 304/916, he became the new financial director in Egypt in 306/919. Dismissed once again in 310/922, he had to pay an enormous fine of 5,000,000 dirhams. In 313/926, he appeared in Fusṭāṭ holding the same fiscal office for Egypt and Syria. He died in 917/929. Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Mādharā'ī, who lived from 258/871 to 345/957, was serving as vizier to Hārūn ibn Khumārawayh in 283/890. After the dynasty's fall, he was exiled to Baghdād from 293 to 301/905 to 913. In 304/916 he returned to Egypt as director of finances. He placed the Birkat al-Ḥabash and Suyūṭ in *waqf* to support the great mosque, the first documented example of agrarian land listed in such a charitable trust. Subsequently, he returned to private life and accumulated wealth. Highly pious, he went on the Pilgrimage every year from 301/914 to 322/934. In 318/930, he again took over the office of financial director in Egypt and held it until Takīn's death in 321/933. The Mādharā'īs would prevail in confrontation with Muḥammad ibn Takīn in 322/934.

The power vacuum of this period invited hostile activities. The Fāṭimid Imāms had established themselves in Ifrīqiya and sought to occupy affluent Egypt in order to set up a power base there more proximate to their 'Abbāsid enemies. As previously noted, they had attempted to conquer the country three times. In 301/914–15, an initial expedition led by the son of Imām al-Mahdī,[9] Abu'l-Qāsim, the future Caliph al-Qā'im bi-Amr Allāh, succeeded in occupying Alexandria but failed to take Fusṭāṭ. Unable to confront Mu'nis, the Fāṭimids retreated to Ifrīqiya. In 919–21/307–09, a second expedition was organized under the same commander. Alexandria and the Fayyūm were occupied but the Fāṭimid fleet met disaster at Rosetta

[9] For an account of al-Mahdī's trip to Africa via Fusṭāṭ in 903–4, see A. Fu'ad Sayyid, "Nuṣūṣ ḍa'ī'a min Akhbār Miṣr li'l-Musabbiḥī," *AI* 27 (1981), 7–8, Arabic section. He was accompanied by his son, al-Qā'im, and was disguised as a merchant. He had considered proceeding directly to Yemen but, fearing exposure, he traveled west and crossed the Nile at the Miṣr bridge.

and Mu'nis proved victorious at Fusṭāṭ. The Fāṭimids called in vain upon the eastern Shi'is to rebel on behalf of the dynasty that descended from 'Alī and Fāṭima. The third campaign, organized by al-Mahdī, but launched after his death in 323/935 by al-Qā'im, utilized troops based in Ifrīqiya and Barqa. A Berber contingent took over Rawḍa Island and burned its arsenal. Al-Ikhshīd, who had just arrived in Egypt, was thus immediately compelled to confront the Fāṭimid invasion. 'Alī ibn Badr and Bajkam, admirals of the Ikhshīdid fleet, and al-Ḥabashī, commandant of the Alexandria garrison, turned traitors together and placed themselves under al-Qā'im's orders. He sent Zaydān and 'Amīr al-Majnūn to join them. In Jumādā I 324/April 936, the Kutāma tribe occupied Alexandria for the third time in fewer than twenty years. However, Ibn Ṭughj regained the city and the Fāṭimid army withdrew to Barka. There would be no more significant Fāṭimid forays against Egypt before the end of Ikhshīdid authority, following Kāfūr's death.

Muḥammad ibn Ṭughj Abū Bakr al-Ikhshīd was born in Baghdād in 268/882 and died in 334/946 at sixty-four years of age. Son of a Ṭūlūnid officer who originated from Farghāna, Muḥammad grew up in Ṭūlūnid territory. Following the dynasty's fall, he and his father were imprisoned in Baghdād in 292/905, but were released a year later. He was appointed governor of Palestine/Ramla in 316/928 and subsequently of Damascus in 319/931. Abu'l-Fatḥ al-Faḍl ibn Ḥinzāba, the son of Abu'l-Khaṭṭāb Ja'far ibn al-Furāt, the supervisor of property taxes in the east and, under al-Rāḍī, fiscal inspector of Egypt and Syria, had given his daughter in marriage to the son of Ibn Rā'iq. He was favorably disposed toward Muḥammad ibn Ṭughj, who was designated as governor of Egypt in 321/933 but was not installed until 323/summer 935. In 327/939, Muḥammad ibn Ṭughj obtained from the Caliph al-Rāḍī confirmation of his appointment as military and fiscal governor, receiving the *laqab* of *al-Ikhshīd* or "servant," a princely title from Farghāna.

After three decades of costly disorders in an Egypt administered by appointed governors, the caliphate had reached the conclusion that only an autonomous prince who, along with his descendants, assumed personal responsibility for this province, would be capable of defending it effectively against the Fāṭimids. And in fact, no significant incursion would occur over the thirty-two years intervening between the Fāṭimid defeat of 324/936 and Kāfūr's death in 357/968.

Al-Mādharā'ī, the director of finances in Egypt, regarded himself as all-powerful and sought to prevent al-Ikhshīd from assuming his post, but his troops abandoned him and rallied to the new governor. Al-Mādharā'ī had to refund his fortune to the Treasury. Confined in prison until 327/939, he was released to become regent for Ūnūjūr, al-Ikhshīd's son. Imprisoned once again in 335/946, he was set free by Kāfūr and allowed to resume his private life until his death in 345/957.

According to Ibn Sa'īd, Ibn Ṭughj was clearly less cultivated than Ibn Ṭūlūn, whom he nonetheless strove to imitate. He was a choleric and gluttonous man, yet shrewd and inclined toward avarice. Having newly arrived at riches, he had experienced prison life and poverty. He had a special passion for perfumes; in Damascus, his house wafted its fragrance throughout the center of the town. He appreciated beautiful objects. The sources indicate moreover that in this period consumer fashions in Fusṭāṭ among the upper classes were marked by a taste for luxury that inclined them to prefer imported commodities at high prices over local products that were too readily available. This proclivity induced Egyptian artisans to refine the style of their commodities and to draw their inspiration from foreign craft techniques and aesthetic forms.

Al-Ikhshīd, as previously noted, had immediately to confront a Fāṭimid invasion. His victory bolstered his authority over Egypt. Following 325/936–37, al-Ikhshīd occupied Syria as far as Aleppo. Like Ibn Ṭūlūn he relied on the Banū Kilāb and selected one of them as amīr of Northern Syria. His authority was disputed by Baghdād, which supported Muḥammad ibn Rā'iq in Syria and Palestine against him. However, a son of this individual, Muzāḥim ibn Muḥammad, had married one of al-Ikhshīd's daughters. In 327/938, al-Ikhshīd threatened to bestow another of his daughters in marriage on the Fāṭimid Imām al-Qā'im and to have the *khuṭba* preached in his name. Ibn Rā'iq, who had failed in his attempt to assume power in Baghdād, set himself up in Damascus and entered into conflict with al-Ikhshīd. He subsequently sought al-Ikhshīd's confirmation of his authority over Syria and Ramla, but the peace initiative of 328/940 came to nothing. Ibn Rā'iq was killed in 330/942 at Mawṣil, and Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥusayn ibn Sa'īd al-Ḥamdānī occupied Aleppo in 332/944 on behalf of the Amir of Mawṣil, Nāṣir al-Dawla.

In 332/944, the Caliph al-Muttaqī, the protégé of Nāṣir al-Dawla, proceeded to Raqqa. Al-Ikhshīd had reoccupied Damascus and driven al-Ḥusayn ibn Sa'īd from Aleppo, and agreed to meet him there. The Caliph refused to take up residence at Fusṭāṭ, but confirmed al-Ikhshīd's authority over Egypt, the Ḥijāz and Syria and returned to Baghdād. Sayf al-Dawla, al-Nāṣir's brother, then made his entry into Aleppo in 333/October 944 at the side of Abu'l-Fatḥ 'Uthmān ibn Sa'īd al-Kilābī. This leader of the Banū Kilāb had a brother, Abu'l-'Abbās Aḥmad, who was then serving as governor of Aleppo, a post he had previously occupied himself on behalf of al-Ikhshīd. In 333–334/spring–autumn 945, al-Ikhshīd took the field against Sayf al-Dawla. Winning a victory at Qinnasrīn, he eventually signed a treaty with him.

A mutually recognized frontier would henceforth separate a Ḥamdānid sphere of influence in northern Syria, comprising the *Jund* (military and fiscal province) of Qinnasrīn-Aleppo and the *Jund* of Ḥomṣ including 'Arqa

and Jūsiyya, from an Ikhshīdid sphere of influence in the south, comprising the *Jund* of Damascus including Tripoli and Ba'labakk, the *Jund* of Tiberiad/Urdunn and the *Jund* of Ramla/Palestine. In addition, the amīr of Egypt pledged himself to pay an annual tribute in compensation for Ḥamdānid abandonment of designs on Damascus. Sayf al-Dawla was to marry the daughter of 'Ubayd Allāh ibn Ṭughj, al-Ikhshīd's brother. The signed accord of 335/946 permitted the Caliph al-Muṭī' to confirm the commander of Aleppo as amīr of northern Syria and his use of Sayf al-Dawla's *laqab*. Not having the same personal tie to the *ribāṭ* of Tarsus as had Ibn Ṭūlūn, al-Ikhshīd wisely renounced his claim to suzerainty over this region on behalf of the Ḥamdānids. They would then assume the honor of confronting the Byzantines in Cilicia and would bear the expenses entailed by this war.[10]

Al-Ikhshīd was dismayed after his visit to the Caliph al-Muttaqī at Raqqa in Muḥarram 333/September 944, to whom he had offered his services in vain. He realized that he would have to abandon forever his plan to install the 'Abbāsid Caliphate at Fusṭāṭ and his ambition for power over northern Syria and the frontier. These regions, tied to the Jazīra and Iraq, were thus threatened with disturbances as soon as Baghdād reasserted its claims of authority. They could not be controlled from Fusṭāṭ. Because of their proximity to the Byzantines, they were defended by well-equipped garrisons and thus posed the risk of offering a victorious officer the opportunity to mount an armed challenge against the central authority. Years later, Ibn Killis would counsel the Fāṭimid Imām al-'Azīz in like fashion.

In Dhu'l-Ḥijja 335/July 946, al-Ikhshīd died in Damascus. The regional context was shifting. The Carmatian leader Abū Ṭāhir had died in 332/944; his nephew al-Ḥasan ibn al-A'ṣam succeeded him and restored the Black Stone to Mecca in 339/950. The Būyids, Imāmī Daylamite officers of Iranian culture who arrived from the mountains of the southern Caspian, had set up a group of allied familial principalities in Iran. They occupied Baghdād in 334/945 and subsequently took charge of the caliph's "protection," despite his stubborn commitment to Sunnism. Soon thereafter the Carmatians abandoned their traditional opposition to the 'Abbāsids and agreed to hire their superb army out to the Caliph's new masters.

Ūnūjār succeeded his father and retained the black eunuch Abu'l-Misk Kāfūr as commander of his armies. Upon learning of al-Ikhshīd's death, Sayf al-Dawla immediately marched upon Damascus and then ventured into Palestine where Kāfūr defeated him. Sayf al-Dawla withdrew to Ḥomṣ and in the spring of 947 regrouped his troops with the 'Uqayl, Numayr, Kalb and Kilāb tribes. He made a foray down to Damascus and again suffered

[10] On the confrontation between al-Ikhshīd and Sayf al-Dawla, there is a detailed summary in the article "Sayf al-Dawla," *EI*2, IX,: 102a–110a.

defeat. Profiting from the absence of the Ikhshīdid army in Syria, Ghabūn, governor of Ashmūnayn and Middle Egypt, revolted, and menaced Fusṭāṭ. He actually invaded the capital before he met his death in July of 947. In the autumn of 336/947, Sayf al-Dawla permanently occupied Aleppo. Kāfūr pursued the Ikhshīdid policy of appeasement and negotiated terms with Sayf al-Dawla. The preceding treaty was reconfirmed but the Egyptians retained Damascus and no longer paid any tribute to the Ḥamdānids. This frontier between northern Syria, inclined toward Iraq, the Jāzīra and Anatolia, and southern Syria, with ties to Egypt and Arabia, would remain intact almost continuously until the Mamlūk seizure of the province in 658/1260.

Throughout the remainder of his life, Sayf al-Dawla would no longer confront the Ikhshīdids. The Egyptian state, now challenged on its western front by the Fāṭimids, resigned itself to the loss of northern Syria. It adhered to the sound principle of abandoning a peripheral province as less costly than maintaining an army on permanent war footing and less dangerous to the amīr's authority. The state would remain master over a vast territory, the traditional bulwark of Egypt comprising the Mediterranean coast from western Tripoli to Syrian Tripoli and the Red Sea all the way to Yemen. Al-Ikhshīd's son thus preserved the essential foundations of his father's power and wealth, leaving to the Ḥamdānid amīr the expensive defense of the frontier against a rearmed Byzantium.

Following al-Ikhshīd's death in 946, the black eunuch Kāfūr wielded real authority, even though he received the title of *Ustādh* only in 966 after the demise of ʿAlī ibn al-Ikhshīd. The historians have painted a highly contrasting portrait of him. They concur on his physical repulsiveness, the contradiction between his perfumed white camphor (*Kāfūr*) and his perfumed black musk (thus his kunya *Abu'l-Misk*) which evoked his name, and the dark hue of his skin and the stench he emitted according to his enemies. His gross figure, deformed and clumsy, effectively disguised his military ability, intelligence and political acumen. The Ikhshīd had noticed when, as a little African boy in his service whose comrades had rushed to behold the arrival of exotic animals from Nubia in Fusṭāṭ, Kāfūr was unaffected, having eyes only for his master and ready to jump to any order he might give.

The texts also uniformly insist on Kāfūr's piety. He was more comfortable with the *'ulamā'* than with poets, as indicated by his sorry experience with al-Mutanabbī. This individual, the most eminent poet of the fourth/tenth century, had come to him when fortune turned against his glorious and rich protector, Sayf al-Dawla. There was more money to be had in Fusṭāṭ than in Aleppo. Yet the poet could not forgive the *Ustādh* for compelling him to render homage to a black eunuch, a former slave of pitiful countenance, while he had sung the praise of the most eminent Arab warriors.

Surrounded by religious men whom he showered with gifts, Kāfūr made

much of his constructing, in addition to a palace, a mosque in Giza and another on the Muqaṭṭam. However, this did not mean that he had relinquished his superstitions: he considered that a *jinn* or demon had once chased him from a house he had built at the Birkat Qārūn.

This was a difficult period. Kāfūr was suspicious of Ūnūjūr, who had once stood up to him. He recruited black soldiers, *al-kāfūriyya*, who engaged in street brawls with soldiers from the east, *al-Ikhshīdiyya*, who had been recruited previously. Egypt was struck by famines in 338/949 and 341/952, there was a devastating fire in Fusṭāṭ in 344/955, and yet another food shortfall and an earthquake in 343/955. These disasters were followed, after Ūnūjūr's death, by the extended and debilitating famine of 352–357/963–968. The grain shortages affected Fusṭāṭ ever more frequently and severely, providing an indication of overpopulation in a city still complacent from its copious supply under Ibn Ṭūlūn. Moreover, the dignity and honesty that characterized actions by the Qāḍī Bakkār in the third/ninth century were no longer apparent in the fourth/tenth. Accusations of embezzlement lodged against the *qāḍīs* and their legal witnesses, predictable in an environment of easy money, multiplied in Fusṭāṭ. By contrast, they remained exceptional in a modest city like Damascus, more provincial in character and subject to closer moral scrutiny. Richly detailed texts that deal with the *qāḍīs* have been preserved which allow a clearer understanding of the changes affecting a society undergoing rapid urbanization and enrichment. A separate and more specifically focused chapter would be necessary to treat the judiciary and religious establishment in Egypt and Syria during this century. Upon the demise of his brother Ūnūjūr in 349/961, ʿAlī ibn al-Ikhshīd officially succeeded him. But Kāfūr retained his grip on real power.

From 338/950, a Nubian incursion reached the oases, and in 343/March 956 a more serious invasion of Aswān and its environs subjected the region to massacres, pillage and capture of prisoners. This invasion was probably supported covertly by the Fāṭimids. In reprisal, Kāfūr despatched an expedition of extermination into Nubia 200 km south of Aswān. Nonetheless, a second Nubian invasion of Egypt occurred in 351–352/963. To the west and north, infiltrations of Berber nomads were reported in the Delta and the Oases. To the northeast, the Bedouin Arabs of the Sulaym, ʿUqayl, Ṭayy, and Kalb tribes were becoming ever more aggressive in southern and central Syria. The Carmatians also reappeared in the region, henceforth collecting an annual tribute and reinforcing their power around Damascus and throughout Palestine. In the overpopulated cities, tensions between religious communities led to grave incidents. Between 348/960 and 351/963, the Ikhshīdid navy was destroyed by the Byzantine fleet. This catastrophe provoked support for a jihād in Egypt, accompanied by spontaneous assaults on Christians by Muslims. The Melkite Christians, aroused by the Byzantine

resumption of the offensive in Cilicia, Cyprus and Crete, took an opposing stand to the Jacobite Coptic Christians who were always hostile toward Constantinople.

A second danger, embedded within the ruling system, threatened Kāfūrid power. Professional soldiers, either slave or freeborn, increasingly interfered with the administrative process. The increase in expropriations from the tax yield and the collaboration between military holders of *iqṭā'* and civilian financiers assigned tax collection – both combined to weaken the state. In the absence of a clear legitimizing principle – designation or recognition by the 'Abbāsid caliph, or birthright – the incessant struggles for political power by senior officers presaged Mamlūk Egypt. Since the strong man, Kāfūr, was a black eunuch without issue, his demise could only set off a major crisis. By contrast, the familial and dynastic rationale for succession among the Daylamite Būyids in Iraq and Iran, or among the Ḥamdānids who were Arabs but strongly influenced by the Kurds of Jazīra and Northern Syria, foreshadowed the Ayyūbid period. In neither case was Arab Sunnī opinion consulted to establish a common rule for political behavior. The attempt by Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn at Damascus in 269/883 to appeal via notables to civil public opinion would have no sequel.

Upon the death of 'Alī ibn al-Ikhshīd in 355/January 966, Abu'l-Misk Kāfūr succeeded him without making the pretense of protecting a prince of the family. Since Aḥmad ibn 'Alī was too young, at the age of ten, to rule, Kāfūr received an official diploma from the caliph in Baghdād and assumed the title of *'Ustādh* or "Master," due to his eunuch status. During this period of grave financial crisis, Kāfūr noted the qualities of Ibn Killis. He was a Jewish merchant born in Baghdād in 318/930 and who was subsequently a money dealer in Syria. Having survived a fraudulent bankruptcy, he became the administrator of agrarian lands in Egypt and then entered Kāfūr's private service. He rapidly memorized the yields of principal agricultural districts in the Nile valley as well as all the information regarding their irrigation and tax policies. To ensure his designation as vizier, Ibn Killis converted to Sunnī Islam with great fanfare. But Kāfūr died shortly thereafter, and the wazīr Abu'l-Faḍl Ja'far ibn al-Furāt, moved quickly to arrest a potential competitor. Upon his release, Ibn Killis traveled to Fāṭimid Ifrīqiya in September 968, where he espoused Ismā'īlism with equal enthusiasm and provided vital assistance to technical preparations for the conquest of Egypt. Kāfūr died in 357/April 968 and was buried in Jerusalem. His death was rumored several times, so that various dates given for it have been retained.

The situation in Fusṭāṭ was desperate. From 963 to 969, a series of low Nile floods brought on a famine that Egypt had not experienced within living memory. The vizier Ja'far Ibn al-Furāt and the Ikhshīdid-Kāfūrid officers pulled in different directions. The senior commanders of the army

reunited to prepare the succession and drafted a manifesto.[11] The governor of Palestine, al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Ṭughj, uncle of the little Ikhshīdid prince, arrived in Fusṭāṭ in 357/autumn 968. He seemed ready to install himself as regent, and ordered the construction of a palace-garden on Rawḍa Island. But he abruptly departed for Palestine in 358/969, releasing Ibn al-Furāt whom he had had imprisoned. The Ikhshīdid possessions in Syria were now vulnerable, since the Ḥamdānid state had been unsettled from 349/960. After Sayf al-Dawla's death nothing any longer seemed to block the Byzantines who were ravaging northern Syria and were not concealing their ambitions towards Tripoli, Damascus and Jerusalem. Central Syria and Palestine were simultaneously coveted by the Carmatians, who exacted tribute payments to leave Damascus. A power vacuum prevailed in Egypt. Alerted to this situation, the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Muʿizz gave Jawhar, his white slave and the general-in-chief of his forces, the order to depart for Egypt at the head of an army in 358/February 969. In June, Jawhar stood before Fusṭāṭ. The senior Ikhshīdid and Kāfūrid officers hesitated over accepting his offer of peaceful submission and eventually decided to fight. Suffering heavy casualties after a fierce resistance, the surviving officers of the former regime escaped to Syria at the beginning of July 969.

Aware of the caliphate's inability to implement effective political policies in the Islamic world, al-Ikhshīd at the end of his life, and Kāfūr subsequently, would abandon Ibn Ṭūlūn's plan to transfer the capital of ʿAbbāsid power to Egypt. They rather attempted to build around Fusṭāṭ and the Nile valley a sound principality that, if it could not take over the whole of the Levant, Arabia, the Yemen, Nubia, and the Libyan zone, could effectively control central and southern Syria, the pilgrimage route, commercial traffic between the Nile valley and the Indian Ocean via the Red Sea, the outlets of trails leading into eastern equatorial Africa, and the coast west of the Delta to dominate the major routes across the central Sahara and north Africa.

They could rely on the support of Fusṭāṭ's population for their objective, and quite likely those of towns in the Delta, Qūṣ and Upper Egypt. The Syrians remained indifferent, but showed no open hostility. From the year 308/920, Egypt's rulers realized that the true danger to them was posed by the eastern ambitions of the Fāṭimid Imāms in Ifrīqiya. Their victory over the ʿAbbāsid caliphate depended on the prerequisite seizure of Egypt. Armed with the fanaticism of their Berber partisans and the highly prosperous economy in north Africa, they would concentrate their propaganda operations on Egypt. Due to the confluence of commercial networks among

[11] On this highly complex period, see the three articles by Thierry Bianquis: "Les derniers gouverneurs ikhchidides à Damas," *BEO*, 23 (1970), 167–196; "La prise du pouvoir en Égypte par les Fatimides," *AI*, 11 (1972), 50–108; "L'Acte de succession de Kafur d'après Maqrizi," *AI*, 12 (1974), 263–269, and the works of Yaacov Lev.

merchants and financiers, Sunnīs, Imāmīs, Ismā'īlīs, Jews and Christians, they were able to infiltrate the ranks of cultural notables, fiscal officials and movers of the economy in Fusṭāṭ. To win over the Sunnī masses whom they could not hope to convert to Shi'ism but who they knew were disaffected with the 'Abbāsids, they played upon the general feeling at this time of fervor toward the People of the Prophet's Family.[12] An intensive period of psychological and political preparation, abetted by the malaise of the Ikhshīdid regime after Kāfūr's death, is more responsible for the Fāṭimids' successful settlement in Egypt than the modest military capacity of the army commanded by Jawhar. Their political agenda in the East was made easier by their predecessors' actions as Egypt's rulers, and by the growing consciousness of the Egyptians throughout the hundred years between 254/868 and 358/969 of the opulent future that was offered their country.

[12] Jere L. Bacharach in, "The Career of Muḥammad ibn Ṭughdj al-Ikhshīd," *Speculum*, 50 (1975), 594, reports a pro-Shi'ite revolt in Egypt during 330/942. See in this article, pp. 604 et seq., his remarks on Ikhshīdid monetary issues.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ABBREVIATIONS

AI	*Annales islamologiques*
BEO	*Bulletin d'études orientales*
BIE	*Bulletin de l'Institut d'Egypte*
BIFAO	*Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire*
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
EI2	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition (Leiden, 1960–).
EIR	*Encyclopaedia Iranica*
EPRO	Études préliminaires aux réligions orientales dans l'Empire romain (Leiden)
IJMES	*International Journal of Middle East Studies*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JARCE	*Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
MESA	Middle East Studies Association of North America (Tucson, AZ)
MIFAO	Mémoires publiés par les membres de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire
MW	*The Muslim World*
REI	*Revue des études islamiques*
SI	*Studia Islamica*
WO	*Die Welt des Orients*

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